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**Title:** Perceived Organizational Support as an Antecedent of Knowledge Sharing Behaviors: Achieving Sustainability of Change Management Efforts

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**Conflict of Interest**

The author (s) declared no conflict of interest and have not received any funds for the project.

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# Perceived Organizational Support as an Antecedent of Knowledge Sharing Behaviors: Achieving Sustainability of Change Management Efforts

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## Abstract

Knowledge is the only way organizations gain sustainable competitive advantage in such a hyper-competitive era. Given its importance, the study examines the antecedents to tacit and explicit knowledge and the mediating role of psychological ownership. We have collected a sample of 157 using online Google forms and physically visiting the banks in certain cases. The study used Smart PLS for statistical analysis. Structural equation modeling was performed on Smart PLS for data analysis as the constructs are reflective. The study found that perceived organizational-support positively influences both dimensions of knowledge-sharing behavior – tacit and explicit knowledge. Psychological ownership positively “mediates perceived organizational support and explicit knowledge sharing.” However, we did not find support for the mediating role of psychological ownership between perceived organizational-support and tacit knowledge sharing. The study recommends the HR department must create awareness of the support it provides to employees. HR professionals must build an all-inclusive workplace culture that embodies organizational support. Furthermore, customized incentives such as extrinsic and intrinsic benefits can encourage employees to share knowledge.

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## Introduction

In the prevailing era of the knowledge-driven economy, organizations use knowledge sharing for talent management strategies since it is important for firms' growth and sustainability (Kravariti et al., 2022). Market leaders can only continue with their superiority by acquiring talents with exceptional knowledge and skills and promoting a culture of knowledge sharing (Edeh et al., 2022). Individuals can acquire knowledge from various secondary sources and by interacting with knowledgeable persons (Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi, Mohammed, 2019). Yang, Van-Rijn, and Sanders (2020) assert that knowledge-sharing promotes cost efficiency and innovation in new product development and strengthens team performance. Kravariti et al. (2022) assert that employees are reluctant to share knowledge because they want to maintain their competitive edge over other employees. Therefore, organizations must build a culture in the workplace that encourages and fosters knowledge-sharing behavior. In this regard, support from management is imperative (Friday & Sunday, 2019).

Studies have shown that perceived organizational support directly influences psychological ownership and indirectly affects sharing behavior (Pittino, Martinez, Chirico, & Galvan, 2018). Extant literature asserts that employees develop a sense of belonging to firms that look after their well-being and make them feel valuable (Dyne & Pierce, 2004). This feeling generates emotional attachment and possessiveness toward the organization, which increases organizational commitment, citizenship behavior, and performance (Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi, Mohammed, 2019).

Social Exchange Theory asserts when employees feel their organization values them, they reciprocate by knowledge sharing and creating activities. Nevertheless, the type of knowledge that is shared makes a significant difference in the growth and sustainability of a business entity (Khan, Usman, Saeed, & Nisar, 2022). The importance of knowledge-sharing behavior is important in knowledge-intensive sectors such as banks. Few studies have examined tacit and explicit knowledge-sharing behavior as distinct constructs (Nguyen & Malik, 2022). Given this gap, the present study contributes to the body of knowledge by examining the relationship of perceived organizational-support with both types of knowledge sharing (i.e, tacit and explicit).

Thus this study examines the impact of perceived organizational-support on tacit and explicit knowledge-sharing behaviors. It also examines mediating roles of psychological ownership between (i) perceived organizational-support and tacit knowledge sharing and (ii) perceived organizational-support and explicit knowledge sharing.

## Literature Review and Hypotheses Building

### Explicit and Tacit Knowledge Sharing

Managing knowledge has become imperative for organizations. Knowledge embodies the experiences, ideas, and expertise necessary for employees to perform organizational duties (Pereira & Mohiya, 2021). This knowledge increases exponentially when employees mutually share knowledge with other employees. Such knowledge-sharing activities are necessary for the growth and sustainability of firms (Rumanti, Wiratmadja, Sunaryo, Ajidarma, & Samadhi, 2019). Rumanti et al. (2019) believe that firms now encourage and reward employees who share their knowledge with others (Rumanti et al., 2019). Pereira and Mohiya (2021) assert that organizations need to share knowledge effectively for uniqueness and competitive advantage (Rialti, Marzi, Caputo, & Mayah, 2020).

Technology facilitates and promotes knowledge sharing. Lopez-Cabarco et al. (2020) and others have classified knowledge into two basic forms; explicit and tacit. Explicit refers to knowledge employees can easily decode, communicate in words, and share within the organization. Such knowledge is tangible, including policies, procedures, and manuals (Olaisen & Revang, 2018). However, tacit knowledge is intangible and difficult to capture, archive, and share since it relates to an individual's personal and unique experiences, exposures, ideas, and expertise (Olaisen & Revang, 2018). Tacit knowledge sharing is contingent on social relationships in the workplace (Lopez-Cabarcos, Srinivasan, & Vazquez-Rodriguez, 2020).

### Perceived Organizational-Support and Tacit Knowledge-Sharing

In the current knowledge-based economy, intellectual capital has become the source of organizational sustainability. Organizations can achieve a "competitive advantage by developing innovative products and business processes" that significantly depend on knowledge-based culture (Olaisen & Revang, 2018; Lopez-Cabarcos, Srinivasan, & Vazquez-Rodriguez, 2020).

Unlike explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is in individuals' minds and is difficult to retrieve without their willingness. Individuals acquire tacit knowledge based on different experiences, beliefs, insights, and know-how (Park & Gabbard, 2018). Therefore, individuals may feel reluctant to share if they are not intrinsically motivated (Terhorst, Lusher, Bolton, Elsum, & Wang, 2018). Ganguly, Talukdar, and Chatterjee (2019), based on a study on the Indian industry, documented that tacit knowledge sharing depends on knowledge reciprocation. This reciprocity-sharing also depends on perceived social benefits (Tsai & Kang, 2019). Thus at the organizational level, individuals share tacit

knowledge if they feel their needs are being taken care of at their workplace. Based on the Social Exchange Theory and other arguments above, we hypothesized that:

*H1: Perceived organizational-support positively affects tacit knowledge-sharing behavior.*

### **Organizational-Support and Explicit Knowledge**

Knowledge-sharing behavior within an organization materializes with an efficient knowledge management mechanism (Anand, Muskat, Creed, Zutshi, & Csepregi, 2021). Explicit knowledge, as iterated in various scholarly articles and publications, is codified and documented knowledge that firms share with employees through policies, reports, or procedures (Wang, Sharma, & Cao, 2016). Sharing explicit knowledge increases job efficiency and effectiveness, eventually enhancing an organization's innovativeness (Le, Lei, Le, Gong, & Ha, 2020).

Extant literature documents that organizational policies, culture, and knowledge-sharing platforms encourage overall knowledge-sharing culture (Le, Lei, Le, Gong & Ha, 2020). However, sharing this knowledge depends on organizational policies (Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi, Mohammed (2019). At an organizational level, workplace culture and high-involvement HRM practices are precursors of explicit knowledge sharing (Cao, Le, & Nguyen, 2021; Le, Lei, Le, Gong & Ha, 2020). At a personal level, extrinsic benefits motivate an individual to mutually share information using different platforms established at the workplace (Park & Gabbard, 2018). Based on empirical evidence, al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi, Mohammed, and (2019) document that knowledge sharing has several benefits, including cost-effectiveness and growth. Cai, Song, Xiao, and Shi (2020) assert that organizations must spend resources on knowledge management platforms as it discourages knowledge-hiding behavior and facilitates explicit knowledge-sharing for a smooth workflow.

Social Exchange Theory postulates that individuals "share knowledge" when they benefit from awards, recognition, reputation, and salary increment. However, little research has examined an individual's perception of knowledge sharing. Yang, van-Rijn, and Sanders (2020) assert that individuals perceive the construct of "perceived organizational support" differently. Therefore, the association between organizational support may vary from one individual to another (Zhang & Liu, 2021). Based on the above, we argue that:

*H2: Perceived organizational-support positively affects explicit knowledge-sharing behavior.*

## Mediating Role of Psychological Ownership

Employees' psychological ownership at the workplace depends on their strong association and belongingness to their respective organizations (Morewedge, Monga, Palmatier, Shu, & Small, 2021). It is an asset that positively affects job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and innovation (Zhang et al., 2021). Psychological ownership develops when employees emotionally, mentally, and physically relate to their organizations. It is only possible when organizations support and own their employees. Thus it eventually enhances psychological ownership (Zhang et al. 2021).

Psychological ownership instills a strong sense of belongingness in an organization. It inculcates a feeling of reciprocity, enabling employees to contribute to the organization by sharing learned behaviors and knowledge with other employees (Morewedge, Monga, Palmatier, Shu, & Small, 2021). Hameed et al. (2019) concluded that psychological ownership positively influences knowledge-sharing behavior. Han, Chiang, and Chang (2010) also validated the association between psychological and knowledge-sharing behavior. We argue that "psychological ownership promotes a sense of responsibility" towards the organization. Literature also argues knowledge sharing enhances employees' sense of contribution to the organization (Morewedge, Monga, Palmatier, Shu, & Small, 2021).

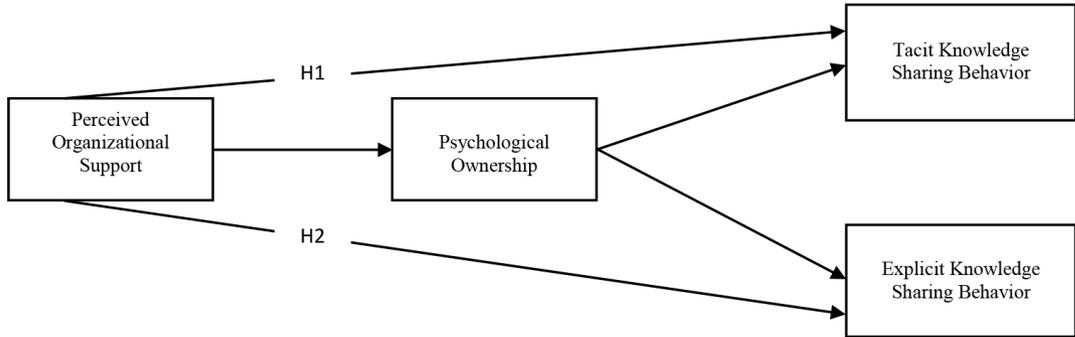
Social Exchange Theory postulates that "employees feel obligated to return the favor" to the organization that cares for their needs by providing extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. We argue that employees "develop a sense of belonging when they perceive that the organization supports their emotional and physical demands" (Zhang et al., 2021). Additionally, perceived organizational support is an antecedent of psychological ownership (Yildiz & Yildiz, 2015). Literature documents that psychological ownership, directly and indirectly, affects perceived organizational and knowledge-sharing behavior. Therefore we argue it mediates "(i) tacit explicit knowledge and (ii) explicit knowledge-sharing behavior."

*H3: Psychological ownership mediates "perceived organizational-support and tacit knowledge-sharing behavior."*

*H4: Psychological ownership mediates "perceived organizational-support and explicit knowledge-sharing behavior."*

## Conceptual Framework

Based on the above theoretical arguments, we have developed a conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1.



**Note:**

H3: Mediating effect of psychological ownership on tacit knowledge sharing

H4: Mediating effect on psychological ownership on explicit knowledge sharing

**Figure -1: Conceptual model**

## Methodology

### Sampling and Procedures

This study aims to empirically investigate the relationship between the constructs of chosen variables. Hence, we adopted the positivist approach since we have examined the causal relationships (McCloskey & Silvestri, 2021). The study’s dependent variables are tacit and explicit knowledge-sharing behaviors, whereas the independent variable is ‘perceived organizational-support. Moreover, the study used psychological ownership as a mediating variable.”

We collected the data from employees at the managerial level in Pakistan’s banking sector, as it is one of the most knowledge-intensive sectors. The study collected data only from employees with more than one year of experience with the current organization. We used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. Since the sample frame for the target population was unavailable, we calculated the minimum required sample size of 85 using G power software. However, the study intercepted 210 employees for stable beta coefficients, of which we received 157 responses. In certain cases, we gathered data using online Google forms and physically visiting the banks. The study used Smart PLS as the sample size was small (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019).

## Measures and Scales

We assessed the responses using a 5-point Likert scale, where one suggests strong disagreement and five indicates strongly agree. All the constructs were measured using the following scales.

### Perceived Organizational-Support

We measured this scale using the scale of Hutchison and Sowa (1986). The original scale had 36 items. However, Yang, van Rijn, and Sander (2020) validated and used a shorter version of five items of the above scale.

### Explicit Knowledge-Sharing

We measured explicit knowledge-sharing behavior using the instrument used and validated by Wang and Wang (2012). The scale consisted of six items. We modified it to align with the study's objectives.

### Tacit Knowledge-Sharing

The study measured tacit knowledge sharing using seven items of the scale developed and validated by Lin (2007).

### Psychological Ownership

The study measured psychological ownership using the scale developed and validated by Dyne and Pierce (2004). The scale consisted of seven items.

Furthermore, the demographic data collected from the respondents included gender, age, tenure at the current organization, and their management-level positions.

## Data Analysis

The study model consisted of one independent variable (perceived organizational support), two dependent variables (tacit and explicit knowledge-sharing behavior), and one mediator (psychological ownership).

### Common Method Bias

Common method bias may artificially inflate the results. Thus we assessed VIF values to check the presence of a common method bias using VIF values (Tehseen et al., 2017).

### Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM was used to investigate causal relationships among the latent constructs. Researchers recommend this technique to examine the predictive power of latent constructs (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). This technique conducts multivariate analysis and runs multiple regression equations simultaneously. SEM has two steps:

First, it generates the measurement model. In the second step, it generates the structural model.

### Measurement Model

Initially, the study generated a measurement model to assess reliability, validity, factor loadings, and AVE. Discriminant validity shows the uniqueness of the constructs. For discriminant validity, we have used the HTMT ratio. Composite reliability assesses the internal consistency of the constructs, and their values must be greater than 0.70. Outer loadings suggest the contribution of each indicator variable to the respective constructs. Researchers suggest dropping the items with a factor loading lesser than 0.70. AVE explains the variance of indicator values towards the latent variables. And R square values suggest the predictive power of the model.

### Structural Model

The structural model assesses the relationships between latent variables. It also depicts the significance of the relationships based on t and p values. However, measurement model measures the relationship between observed and latent variables.

## Results and Findings

### Respondents Profile

The majority of the respondents were males. Furthermore, most of the respondents belonged to the middle management level with more than 05 years of experience at the current organization. Respondents' profile is depicted in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Respondents' Profile**

Variables	Categories	Percentage
Genders	Male	64%
	Female	36%
Age	23-27 Years	25%
	28 - 32 years	52%
	33 - 37 years	11%
	38 - 42 years	12%
Tenure at Current Organization	More than 01 but less than 03 years	34
	03 to less than 05 years	31
	More than 05 years	35
Management Level	Top management	5
	Middle management	73
	Lower management	22

### Common Method Bias

We have assessed the common method bias based on the VIF values. The results presented in Table 2 depict all the VIF values are lesser than 3.3 suggesting the data set has no issues related to multi-collinearity and common method bias (Tehseen et al., 2017).

**Table 2: VIF Values**

Construct	VIF
Tacit Knowledge Sharing	1.857
Explicit Knowledge Sharing	1.297
Psychological Ownership	1.288
Perceived Organizational Support	1.802

### Outer Loadings, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted

Table 3 depicts the outer loadings of items of each construct, reliability values, and AVE values. Outer loading suggests the contribution of each item towards the construct. Researchers suggest dropping the items with low threshold levels (i.e., <0.7) (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). Thus we have removed the items whose threshold levels were less than 0.5.

Furthermore, Table 3 also indicates the composite reliability related to the constructs' internal consistency. The threshold for composite reliability is 0.7, which is met well by all the constructs used in this study (Hair et al., 2019).

**Table 3: Outer Loadings, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted**

Constructs	Item Code	Indicator Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Tacit Knowledge	TK1	0.732	0.844	0.578
	TK2	0.878		
	TK3	0.796		
	TK4	Removed		
	TK5	Removed		
	TK6	0.723		
	TK7	0.734		
Explicit Knowledge	EK1	0.863	0.816	0.598
	EK2	0.779		
	EK3	REMOVED		
	EK4	0.768		

	EK5	REMOVED		
	EK6	0.787		
Per. Organizational Support	POS1	0.744	0.837	0.512
	POS2	0.728		
	POS3	0.852		
	POS4	0.786		
	POS5	0.725		
Psychological Ownership	PO1	0.741	0.903	0.611
	PO2	0.85		
	PO3	0.732		
	PO4	0.831		
	PO5	0.869		
	PO6	0.742		
	PO7	REMOVED		

The study used 25 indicator variables. We dropped five indicator variables as “their values were lesser than 0.70.” The results also show that all the “composite reliability values are greater than 0.70, suggesting adequate internal consistency of the constructs.” All the “AVE values are greater than 0.50, suggesting acceptable convergent validity” of the constructs used in the study (Lee, 2019).

### **Discriminant Validity**

The study used the HTMT ratio to assess the discriminant validity. Table 4 shows that HTMT ratio values are lesser than 0.90 suggesting the constructs are unique and distinct (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019).

**Table 4: Discriminant Validity**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>EK</b>	<b>PO</b>	<b>POS</b>	<b>TK</b>
Explicit Knowledge	-			
Psychological Ownership	0.414			
Perceived Organizational Support	0.809	0.746		
Tacit Knowledge	0.829	0.355	0.569	-

### **Variance in Endogenous Variable**

We generated R square values to assess the variance in the dependent variables caused by the independent variable. The results in Table 5 show that the variance caused by both independent variables is moderate. R square values less than 0.25 suggest low variance. R square values between 0.25 and 0.50 suggest moderate variance. R square values greater than 0.50 suggest high variance.

**Table 5: R Square Values**

Construct	R square	Result
Tacit Knowledge-Sharing Behavior	0.320	Moderate
Explicit Knowledge Sharing Behavior	0.390	Moderate

## Path Analysis

After successfully assessing the measurement model, we moved on to the structural model and conducted path analysis to check the hypotheses. This study articulated four hypotheses, and Table 5 presents the summarized results.

**Table 5: Hypothesis Results**

Hypothesis	$\beta$ Values	T Values	P Values	Results
<b>Direct Hypothesis</b>				
Per. Org. support -> Tacit Knowledge Sharing (H1)	0.541	2.910	0.002	Supported
Per. Org. support -> Explicit Knowledge Sharing (H2)	0.478	2.296	0.011	Supported
<b>Indirect Hypothesis</b>				
Per. Org. Sup. -> Psy. Own. > Tact. Knowledge (H3)	0.183	1.217	0.112	Not Supported
Per. Org. Sup.->Psy. Own, > Explicit. Knowledge (H4)	0.210	3.359	0.000	Supported

Our results support Hypothesis 1 ( $\beta=0.541$ ,  $t=2.910<0.05$ ), Hypothesis 2 ( $\beta=0.478$ ,  $t=2.296<0.05$ ), and Hypothesis 4 ( $\beta=0.210$ ,  $t=3.359<0.05$ ). But our results do not support Hypothesis 3 ( $\beta=0.183$ ,  $t=1.217>0.05$ ).

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Discussion

Extant literature asserts that knowledge management is necessary for sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations innovate and nurture entrepreneurial mindsets by applying knowledge management technology and systems (Vaio, Palladino, Pezzi, & Kalisz, 2021). Knowledge management and knowledge creation are only possible when the members of organizations share knowledge with others (Le, Lei, Le, Gong & Ha, 2020). We examined the factors that “motivate employees toward knowledge-sharing behaviors.” As iterated earlier, knowledge has two important facets: tacit and explicit. Prior studies have examined knowledge-sharing behavior as a unidimensional construct. However, we have separately examined perceived organizational support’s effect on tacit and explicit knowledge-sharing.

We found that perceived organizational support positively affects tacit and explicit knowledge-sharing behaviors. The findings align with the works of Zhang and Liu (2021), who found that perceived organizational-support positively affects knowledge-sharing behavior. Our findings also align with the Social Exchange Theory that postulates when individuals feel that an organization takes care of their needs, they reciprocate the gesture by sharing their knowledge with the rest of their colleagues and peers. Moreover, the results are consistent with the findings of Choi, Goo, and Choi (2022), who found that organizational support leads to a positive attitude and voluntary knowledge-sharing behaviors.

We also examined the “mediating effect of psychological ownership between perceived organizational-support and tacit knowledge-sharing behavior,” which our results do not support. This phenomenon implies that psychological ownership has a non-significant effect on individuals’ choice to share knowledge embedded in their minds (Obrenovic et al., 2020). Perhaps this non-significant relationship exists due to individuals’ possessiveness towards organizational knowledge and reluctance to give up their competitive advantage.

However, we found “psychological ownership mediates perceived organizational-support and explicit knowledge.” These findings align with the Social Exchange Theory that postulates “employees develop a sense of ownership of the organizations and share their knowledge” with others when they feel organizations are concerned about their needs and have supportive behaviors toward them (Hameed et al., 2019).

## **Conclusion**

To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first that examined tacit and explicit knowledge-sharing behavior, taking both as distinct constructs. Furthermore, the study “examined the mediating roles of psychological ownership between perceived organizational-support and both constructs of knowledge-sharing behavior.” The results support the direct relationships between “perceived organizational support and explicit and tacit knowledge-sharing behavior.” These results conclude that “employees would share knowledge in the presence of perceived organizational support.” Furthermore, “psychological ownership mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and explicit knowledge. However, it did not support the mediating effect of psychological ownership between perceived organizational-support and tacit knowledge.

## **Practical Implications**

The competitive advantage in this hypercompetitive-driven global economy

depends on the sound knowledge of an organization's employees. Thus, organizations must archive and manage knowledge efficiently to meet future needs and create new knowledge. Social Exchange Theory also postulates that employees would reciprocate if organizations cared for their physical and emotional needs and well-being. The HR department must create awareness of the support it provides to employees. HR professionals must build an all-inclusive workplace culture that embodies organizational support. Also, customized incentives such as extrinsic and intrinsic benefits can encourage employees to share knowledge. In addition, psychological ownership promotes sharing of explicit and tacit knowledge. Therefore organizations must develop a culture that encourages and rewards for knowledge sharing.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

We collected quantitative data. This research uses cross-sectional data instead of longitudinal data collected from Karachi, which might limit its generalisability to other geographical regions. We suggest others collect the data from other cities based on longitudinal design. However, to enrich the study, we recommend others collect qualitative data. Cultural aspects and demographic factors affect knowledge-sharing behavior, which was beyond the scope of the study. Future studies may incorporate them as moderators.

## Annexure-1

### Constructs and Items Used in the Questionnaire

#### Explicit Knowledge

EK1. People in my organization frequently share existing reports and official documents with others.

EK2. People in my organization frequently share reports and official documents that they prepare themselves with members of my organization.

EK3. People in my organization frequently collect reports and official documents from others at work.

EK4. People in my organization are frequently encouraged by knowledge-sharing mechanisms.

EK5. My organization frequently offers a variety of training and development programs.

EK6. People in my organization are facilitated by IT systems for knowledge sharing.

#### Tacit Knowledge

TK1. People in my organization frequently share knowledge based on their experience.

TK2. People in my organization frequently collect knowledge from others based on their experience.

TK3. People in my organization frequently share knowledge and know with whom to share with.

TK4. People in my organization frequently collect knowledge and know how to share it with others.

TK5. People in my organization frequently share knowledge based on their expertise.

TK6. People in my organization frequently collect knowledge from others based on their expertise.

TK7. People in my organization share successful and unsuccessful experiences.

#### Perceived Organizational Support

POS1. My organization cares about my opinions.

POS2. My organization considers my goals and values.

POS3. My organization helps me to perform my job to the best of my ability.

POS4. My organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.

POS5. My organization would fail to notice even if I did the best job possible.

#### Psychological Ownership

PO1. This is my organization.

PO2. I sense that this organization is our company.

PO3. I feel a very high degree of personal ownership of this organization.

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PO4. I sense that this is my company.

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PO5. I feel this is our company.

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PO6. Most people working for this organization feel that they own the company.

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PO7. It is hard for me to think about this organization as mine.

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