

**Measuring the Use of Social Media Networks (SMNs) in Knowledge Sharing,  
by Using Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) A Study Conducted in Some of Iraqi  
Universities**

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**Abstract**

SMNs like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp,..etc. are among the most popular sites on the Internet. These sites can provide a powerful means of sharing, organizing, finding information and knowledge. The popularity of these sites provides an opportunity to measure the use of them in knowledge sharing, that needs a special scale, but unfortunately there is no special scale for that. Thus, this study supposes to use SCT as a scale to measure the use of SMNs in electronic knowledge sharing due to it has been used to measure the knowledge sharing with its traditional form. This study can help the decision makers to use these SMNs to share the academics' knowledge in educational institutes to the communities by adopting special plans and strategies to address the main factors in such cases that will help to increase the knowledge sharing between academics and communities. The aim of this study to know the amount of using SMNs by academics to share their own knowledge with the community, that will reflect on educate the community and disseminate the culture within the community. Additionally, to address what the main factor can affect them to share their knowledge with other. The study uses SCT which consists of three factors: (Personal, Environment, and Behavior) as an independent variable, while the dependent variable is: (Knowledge Sharing). Furthermore, quantitative method is adopted in this study by using electronic questionnaire through Google Documents with "Five Scale of Likert" to collect the data from participants (250), who are the staff of some Iraqi universities. SPSS has been used in analyzing the collected data. The findings of study come up with the following: the environmental factor has the greatest influence, then the behavioral factor which is lesser and the personal factor has the lowest influence. Finally, the study found

that there is a possibility and ability to measure knowledge sharing by using SCT electronically.

Paper type: research paper.

**Keywords:** Knowledge Sharing, Social Media Networks (SMNs), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

## 1. Introduction

Social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have connected people around the world in ways that people did not expect, and with the programs and services provided on the Internet that allow users to meet virtually online to communicate exchange of new ideas and information, and discuss it with others from all over the world, we find that the global village has come true indeed. So there is no doubt, that social media networks are the future and has become a hallmark and especially for the younger generations to interact with the world. Furthermore, the number of internet users reached in 2018 around 4.021 billion users (an increase about 7% annually), according to the reports of “we are social” and “hootsuite” websites, that means more than half of world’s population are now connected to the internet (Al-Shahrani, 2019:185). While the number of SMNs users reached in 2018 to 3.196 billion users (with an increase about 13% annually) according to Global Digital Report (Global Digital Report, 2018:8). So, these huge numbers of users learn from sharing their information and knowledge.

Nowadays, SMN<sub>(s)</sub> is considered as the main tool for knowledge creation and sharing. In addition, it becomes a virtual learning environment which helps users to transfer knowledge and train themselves efficiently (Aczel et al, 2008:501). Also, it has changed the methods of learning by facilitating the communication and interaction between the sources and the learners, providing an easy tool to share their knowledge (Moon et al, 2005:373) (Tynjala and Hakkinen, 2005:318).

Many theories used to measure the traditional knowledge sharing and learning process, one of them is Social Cognitive Theory, and no one was used to measure them in electronic form, thus this guides us to use it to measure the and knowledge sharing electronically, and to know its possibility to do that.

The following previous studies with their main contributions have been tackled below and taken into consideration in order to have a holistic theoretical framework.

Long et al (2007) gave a way for knowledge sharing measuring which is occurred in open source software. The study deal with quality and quantity of knowledge sharing by developing a special content analyzer software for the sharing messages (Long et al, 2007:1)

As for Lee (2011), who created a modified model of UTAUT to test usage behavior of mobile video adoption in Taiwan. He used qualitative method in this study. Furthermore, he used questionnaire with open ended questions. Data were collected from six participants from IOS and Android users, two professionals, two experts, and one focus group with five members. The findings in this study

are “Effort Expectancy” “Perceived Playfulness” “Facilitating Conditions” and “Performance expectancy” factors had positive influence to users’ usage behaviors (Lee, 2011:1).

While Kwakye et al, (2011) established a framework of knowledge sharing. This framework consists of two social theories which affect knowledge sharing. The first is Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) which involves two constructs namely Altruism and Self-Efficacy. The second one is Social Exchange Theory (SET) which involves two constructs namely Mutual Reciprocity and Trust. All of these constructs have positive effects on knowledge sharing. The researchers used a questionnaire to collect the data and then analyzed the multiple regression in the study’s data (Kwakye et al, 2011:1).

However, Mardikyan et al, (2012) proposed a new model of UTAUT for technology acceptance and usage. They argue that there are six external factors (perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, price, variety of services, service quality, and social influence), and control factors (gender, age, education level, experience, occupation, payment type) that affect the behavioral intention, all of which are surveyed (Mardikyan et al, 2012:1).

Additionally, Alrawashdeh et al, (2012) studied the factors affecting acceptance of web-based training system by using extended UTAUT and structural equation modeling to train workers with more efficient and effectiveness anywhere and anytime. This study aims to provide a new model of UTAUT with some extension through using some factors of web-based training system such as performance expectancy, facilitating conditions, social influence and system flexibility that affects the workers’ intention directly and effort expectancy, system enjoyment and system interactivity that have indirect effect on employees’ intention indirectly to use WBTS (Alrawashdeh et al, 2012:1)

According to the previous studies review, none of them has analyzed the usage of SMNs knowledge sharing field by using SCT which is the main theory and has been adopted in this study to analyze the traditional knowledge sharing, as well as its factors especially in educational environment. In addition to that, most of the studies focus on UTAUT which is used to measure and analyze the acceptance and usage of technology regardless the theories which are used to analyze and measure knowledge sharing and the process of learning in general.

The research problem arises in the light of the reality which is witnessing a great explosion of knowledge. The popularity of SMNs is not limited to communities in developed countries, but is also increasing rapidly in all societies. On this basis, the use of these sites by academics and the understanding of the factors that may affect their sharing of knowledge has become imperative for the success of their use in the educational process. In order to know the role of SMNs in their knowledge sharing with the community, we should measure it to know its importance in that, and because of there is no a special scale or theory to measure that, thus SCT is adopted to do so. However, SCT is a special theory to measure the knowledge sharing and learning process traditionally. In this study, SCT is used to measure that processes but electronically, also to know its validity and possibility to do that. Thus the study tries to find out satisfied answers for the questions below:

• Is there a possibility to measure the use of SMNs in knowledge sharing among the academic staff in educational institutes? This question can be broken down into the following questions:

1. What is the extent of the personal factor in using SMNs by the academic staff in their knowledge sharing?

2. What is the extent of the environmental factor in the use of SMNs by the academic staff in their knowledge sharing?

3. What is the extent of the behavioural factor in the use of SMNs by the academic staff in their knowledge sharing?

1. This is the first study in using social cognitive theory in measuring the knowledge sharing, where this theory is used to measure them traditionally.

2. This study helps the decision makers in educational institutes to adopt SMNs in learning process and knowledge sharing as it is needed in their institutes, especially, the use of these websites is limited in this area.

The study aims to:

1. Measuring the use of SMNs in knowledge sharing in the academic fields.

2. Identifying the effective factors in the usage of SMNs in knowledge sharing.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Research Hypotheses**

The main hypothesis of the study is “There is a possibility to measure the use of SMNs on knowledge sharing by using Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)”, this hypothesis can be broken down into two sub-hypotheses, are

• H1: There is a relationship between the use of SMNs and knowledge sharing by using (SCT). Furthermore, this sub-hypothesis has three sub-sub-hypotheses which are:

1. There is a relationship between personal factor and knowledge sharing (H11).

2. There is a relationship between environmental factor and knowledge sharing (H12).

3. There is a relationship between behavioral factor and knowledge sharing (H13).

• H2: There is an influence between the use of SMNs on knowledge sharing by using (SCT) (H2). this sub-hypothesis has three sub-sub-hypotheses which are:

• There is an influence of personal factor on knowledge sharing (H21).

• There is an influence of environmental factor on knowledge sharing (H22).

• There is an influence of behavioral factor on knowledge sharing (H23).

The following diagram illustrates the main hypotheses of the study:

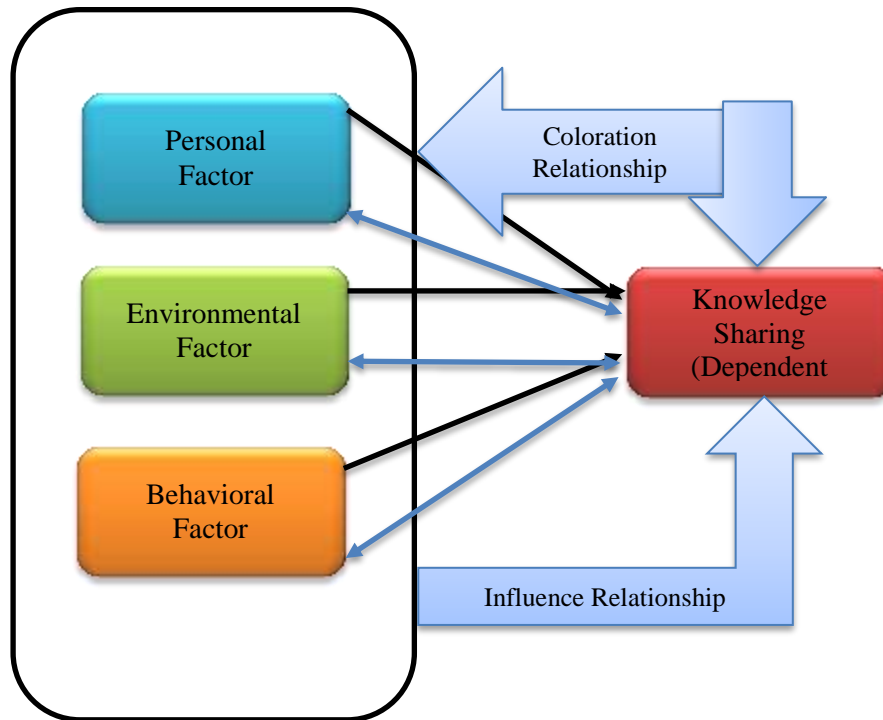


Figure (1) Study Hypotheses

## **2.2 Some Related Concepts**

### **2.2.1 Knowledge:**

Knowledge is mostly defined as: “values, cognitive image, intuition, and insight that should be considered as intangible assets because knowledge has an added value in our daily activities” (Aarons, 2011:13)

According to Collins (2010) “Knowledge” can be classified into two main types, are: Explicit knowledge, which can be recorded, transformed, shared, and directly documented in documents, books, or something like that. The second type is “Tacit knowledge”, which is difficult to be recorded, documented or transformed, including: skills, experience, and wisdom of individuals (Collins, 2010:1-3)

### **2.2.2 Knowledge Sharing**

Knowledge sharing can be defined as the practice of exchanging knowledge including skills, understanding, and experience among people by using tools or media such as IT/ICT. Knowledge sharing is essential to fill the gap among people (Tsui et al, 2006:5).

As Paloti and Nagar (2010) urges “Knowledge Sharing” becomes one of the most important part of knowledge management. Furthermore, the importance of knowledge sharing comes from being used in making good decisions for organization. Therefore, knowledge sharing lies in the minds of employees of the organization (tacit knowledge). For instance, sometimes the employees leave their

jobs which may harm the organizational knowledge, but with knowledge sharing, other employees will probably be able to acquire this knowledge and save it in another form “explicit knowledge” (Paloti & Nagar, 2010:1).

### **2.2.3 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)**

This theory was developed by Bandura (1989), It can be a base of social learning theory. It consists of three interchangeable factors (personal, behavior, and environment). This theory states that an “individual can get knowledge by observing others” behavior in a part of the environment”. According to (Bandura, 1989:9), the SCT theory suggests that individual’s mind could be considered as an instrument to guide people towards formulating expectations, abilities and outcomes, etc. The theory is based on two concepts: The first one is *Altruism* that is, the behavior by which an individual makes an effort to benefit others as argues. While, the second one is *self-efficacy*, that is, the ability to control the behavior, and people will share their knowledge when they find suitable environment and social networks (Kurnties&Gewirits, 2014:32-34).



Figure (2) Social Cognitive Theory Factors

SCT proposes that the behavior could be described as an interchangeable relationship with environmental and personal factors (Johns & Saks, 2008:89-90).

1. **Behavior:** which means the individuals’ performance their reactions towards learning or knowledge sharing, and they have to know what they do and how to do it.

2. **Environment:** which refers to all environmental factors which affect their behavior towards learning and knowledge sharing, such as: society, culture, economics, and so on.

3. **Personal:** which refers to the ability of individuals to either accept or refuse learning and knowledge sharing.

### **2.2.4 Social Media Networks (SMNs)**

The first definition of SMNs was in 1997 by “SixDegrees.com” (Boyd&Ellison, 2012:2). defined SMNs as web-based sites which enable individuals to:

(1) Create unique public or semi-public profiles. (2) Clear list of users who can be connected. (3) View their friends list which is made by others. (4) Share and exchange electronic content with them including multimedia (videos, audios, texts, etc.). (5) Meet strangers. (6) Extend people relations. (7) Secure their profiles. (8) Chat to others. (9) Comment to others as a feedback privately or in public. (Boyd&Ellison, 2012:2)

While others defined SMNs as: web-based websites, applications, and services which help people to share their data, information, and knowledge with others.

Furthermore, those applications and services are called by Web 2.0, such as: Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Wikis, Social bookmarking, and so on (Dewing, 2012:2).

### 3. EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Data Collection

This study adopts Survey Method electronically by using “Google Documents”, which could be considered as one of the best methods to collect facts and information for the descriptive studies, in order to either accept or reject null and alternative hypothesis.

The electronic questionnaire could be depended on to collect accurate facts and information to be adopted in this study because the collected information cannot be edited.

In this study, quantitative method is adopted, so questionnaire with five-point scale (from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) is used. This Questionnaire was distributed to 250 of academic staff of some of Iraqi universities.

#### 3.2 Data Analysis Techniques and Tools

The collected data through the surveys was analyzed by using SPSS. Furthermore, this study adopted Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique to measure the relation among the factors of SCT; knowledge sharing in order to test the hypothesis among the variables in the model Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in a statistical methodology which takes a confirmatory (hypothesis testing) approach to the structural analysis of data representing some phenomena (Kline, 2005:9).

#### 3.3 Descriptive Statistical Perspective

The following Table (1) presents an overview of Universities’ staff participates in this study in terms of the demographic information, such as gender, age and education level.

Table (1) Demographic information of respondents

	Variable	Frequency	Percent %
Gender	Male	195	78
	Female	55	22
Age (By years)	26-30	125	50
	31-35	75	30
	36-40	20	8
	41-45	10	4
	46-50	5	2
	+50	15	6
Education	Diploma	5	2
	Bachelor	25	10
	Master	190	76
	Doctorate	30	12

Academic Experience (By years)	1-5	140	56
	6-10	50	20
	11-15	35	14
	16-20	10	4
	21-25	10	4
	+26	5	2
Academic Rank	Asst. Lecturer	175	70
	Lecturer	45	18
	Asst. Professor	20	8
	Professor	10	4
Experience of Internet Using (By years)	1-5	10	4
	6-10	95	38
	11-15	145	58

After using SPSS as a method to analyze the results of the questionnaire's responses, the study discusses below the following statistical methods with the managerial interpretations of those statistical issues shown in the process of computerized analysis of the collected data:

**Correlation:** It is one of the most common and most useful statistics. It is that number which describes the degree of relationship between two variables.

Table (2) Correlations

Independent Variable		Dependent Variable	Coloration	
Use of SMNs	personal	Knowledge Sharing	0.356**	0.479**
	Environmental		0.423**	
	Behavior		0.410**	

The researcher has used correlation to shed light on the relationship among Knowledge Sharing and SCT factors; Environmental, Personal and Behavioral respectively.

As it is shown in the table (2), most of the correlational relationships between the study components are significant, which means that the study could compare and analyze very vital factors which affect positively or negatively on the process of sharing the knowledge by using SMNs.

The significant values of all of the study are at the level of 0.01 which means that the percentage of factors compatibility is around 99% that adds a worth value to the study's validity. Evidently, the environmental aspect of the study has the highest degree (0.423), that means the relationship between (Knowledge Sharing) and (the behavioral factor) is the most powerful relation if it is compared to the other variables. The second highest value seen in this correlation table is the relationship between (behavioral factor) and (Sharing Knowledge) which is (0.410).



As it is expected by most of statisticians and managerial experts the environmental aspects of human beings are not predictable, for this reason we notice the percentage of the relation between (personal factor) and (knowledge Sharing) is (0.356) which is a very low degree amongst the other.

Although, the total coloration between the main factors of the study indicates (0.479), that means there is a significant positive relationship between them, that leads us to accept the first sub-hypothesis (H1) with its sub-sub-hypotheses.

**Regression:** Regression can be used to analyze the influencing relationship between the study variables, due to the second sub-hypothesis (There is an influence between the use of SMNs on knowledge sharing by using (SCT))

**Table (3) Regression**

Dependent Variable	Statistical Indicators	Use of SMNs	Personal	Environmental	Behavioral
KS	b	1.012	0.602	0.566	0.723
	$\beta$	0.588	0.402	0.383	0.599
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.346	0.162	0.147	0.359
	Calculated (F)	133.74	48.911	43.603	141.569
	Sig	0.000	0.003	0.005	0.000
	Influence	Does	Does	Does	Does
	Hypothesis	Accept	Accept	Accept	Accept

Table (3) shows the analysis results of independent variable's influence on the dependent variable, where the use of SMNs has a significant influence in knowledge sharing. Furthermore, calculated (F) value is 133.74 which is bigger than the tabular (F) value when FD (1-250). While, (R<sup>2</sup>) explained (34.6%) of the occurred variations in Knowledge sharing. Moreover, ( $\beta$ ) value was (0.588) which indicates that the change value of knowledge sharing if use of SMNs changes with one unit. Additionally, due to (Sig) was (0.000) and calculated (F) value bigger than the tabular (F) value, so the second sub-hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

To go in details to know which factor of the independent variable has the highest and lowest influence, as the following:

4. **Personal factor:** the value of R<sup>2</sup> reached (0.162) that indicates the personal factor explains (16%) of the occurred variation in knowledge sharing. While ( $\beta$ ) was (0.602) shows the change value of knowledge sharing if personal factor changes with one unit. More, (F) value was (48.911) which is bigger than the tabular (F) value, that leads us to accept (H21) (There is an influence of personal factor on knowledge sharing).
5. **Environmental factor:** the value of R<sup>2</sup> was (0.147) that refers the environmental factor explains approximately (15%) of the occurred variation in the dependent variable. However, ( $\beta$ ) reached (0.566) that refers to the change value of knowledge sharing if environmental factor changes with one unit. Moreover, (F) value was (43.603) which is bigger than the tabular (F) value, that leads us to accept (H22) (There is an influence of environmental factor on knowledge sharing).

6. Behavioral factor: its  $R^2$  equals (0.359) that means the behavioral factor explains around (35%) of the occurred variation in the dependent variable. As well as, ( $\beta$ ) was (0.599) which refers to the change value of knowledge sharing if behavioral factor changes with one unit. Last but not least, the calculated (F) value reached (141.569) which is bigger than the tabular (F) value, that leads us to accept (H23) (There is an influence of behavioral factor on knowledge sharing).

#### 4. Conclusions

As a general result, there is a possibility to measure SCT in knowledge sharing electronically, and the study came out with its validity in using it in measuring the electronic form of knowledge sharing.

To go in details, depending on the results of the study, the strongest relationship and influence between environmental factor and knowledge sharing because of the medical procedures and quarantine which were enforced after coronavirus (keeping at home), so most of staff have no alternative to use SMNs to share the knowledge because they cannot share it face to face. In addition to the ease of using the technology (internet, smartphones, computers. etc.) and the ability to use them wherever we go. Moreover, the relationship between the behavioral factors and knowledge sharing has evidently been appeared at the middle level, as the SMNs have become one of the most habits which we do every day (for staff and other people as well). Finally, the weakest relationship was between the personal factors and knowledge sharing belongs to most staff use SMNs in order to share their knowledge to educate the community regardless using it to express their personal intentions like to enjoy or express their personality.

Looking at the results, it is clear that there is the need to provide an institutional environment that takes care of the development of knowledge sharing in all disciplines. This interest can be achieved through training courses and continuing support for the process of expanding the use of technology in education.

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## قياس استخدام شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي في المشاركة في المعرفة باستخدام نظرية الادراك الاجتماعي: دراسة تطبيقية في بعض الجامعات العراقية

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### المستخلص:

شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي مثل الفيسبوك، يوتيوب، تويتر، واتساب.. الخ هم من أكثر المواقع شيوعاً وانتشاراً على الانترنت. ويمكن لهذه المواقع ان تقدم أداة قوية لمشاركة وتنظيم والبحث عن المعلومات والمعرفة. لذا فإن شيوع وانتشار هذه المواقع اعطى الفرصة لقياس استخدامها في المشاركة في المعرفة، وهذا يتطلب مقياس خاص، ولسوء الحظ لا يوجد مقياس خاص بذلك. لذلك اقترحت هذا الدراسة استخدام نظرية الادراك الاجتماعي كمقياس لاستخدام شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي في المشاركة في المعرفة الالكترونية كون هذه النظرية تم استخدامها لقياس المشاركة في المعرفة بشكلها التقليدي. يمكن لهذه الدراسة ان تساعد متخذي القرار على استخدام شبكات التواصل الاجتماعي لمشاركة معرفة الأكاديميين في المؤسسات التعليمية مع المجتمعات من خلال اعتماد خطط واستراتيجيات خاصة التي تحدد العوامل الرئيسية في هذا الصدد، وذلك سوف يساعد على زيادة تشاركية المعرفة بين الأكاديميين والمجتمع وبين الأكاديميين فيما بينهم. تهدف هذه الدراسة لمعرفة كم هو استخدام الأكاديميون لشبكات التواصل الاجتماعي لمشاركتهم بمعارفهم الخاصة مع المجتمع والذي بدوره ينعكس على تعليم وتنقيف المجتمع. إضافة الى تحديد ما هو العامل الأساسي الذي يؤثر على نشرهم لمعارفهم مع الاخرين. استخدمت الدراسة نظرية الادراك الاجتماعي والتي بدورها تتكون من ثلاث عوامل مستقلة هي: (الشخصية، السلوكية، والبيئية) كمتغير مستقل، بينما كان العامل المعتمد هو المشاركة في المعرفة. تم الاعتماد على الأسلوب الكمي في هذه الدراسة وذلك من خلال اعتماد الاستبيان الإلكتروني من خلال ملفات كوكل بمقياس لكيرت الخماسي لجمع البيانات من المشاركين (250 مشارك) من كوادر بعض الجامعات العراقية. ولغرض تحليل البيانات المجموعة تم استخدام برنامج SPSS للوصول الى النتائج. توصلت الدراسة الى ان العوامل البيئية كانت لها التأثير الأكبر، ومن ثم يأتي بعدها العوامل السلوكية، بينما العوامل الشخصية كانت هي الأقل تأثيراً. وتوصلت الدراسة في النهاية الى إمكانية وقدرة نظرية الادراك الاجتماعي الى قياس المشاركة بالمعرفة بشكلها الإلكتروني. نوع البحث: ورقة بحثية.

**المصطلحات الرئيسية للبحث / المشاركة بالمعرفة، مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، نظرية الادراك الاجتماعي.**