



An Overview of Factors Influencing Knowledge Sharing in Organizations



OUTLINE



Background



Knowledge sharing programmes



Factors which influence knowledge sharing



Empirical evidence



Implementation approaches: Some suggestions



Random reflections



BACKGROUND

Background: Knowledge Sharing

■ Definition:

- Knowledge sharing is defined as activities of transferring or disseminating knowledge from one person, group or organization to another (Lee, 2001).
- People who share a common purpose and experience similar problems come together to exchange ideas and information (MacNeil, 2003).
- Knowledge sharing is basically the act of making knowledge available to others within the organization (Ipe, 2003).
- Knowledge sharing is the behavior of disseminating one's acquired knowledge with other members within one's organization (Ryu et al., 2003).

Background: Knowledge Sharing

■ Definition:

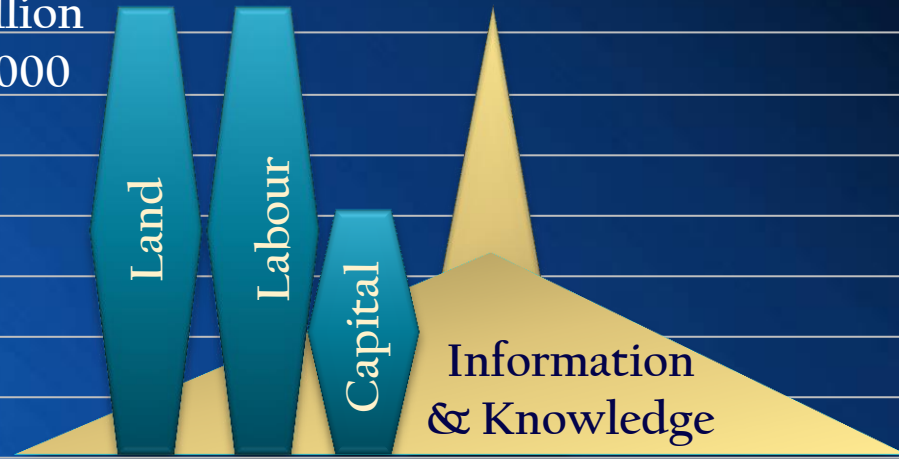
Is the act of making knowledge available to others



Background: Knowledge Sharing

■ Is knowledge sharing a new management fad?

Hominids	- 7 million to - 2.6 million
Scavengers	- 2.6 million to - 600,000
Hunters/Gatherers	- 600,000 to - 10,000
Horticultural period	- 10,000 to - 4,000
Agrarian Age	- 4,000 to 1,700
Industrial Age	1700 to 1960
Information Age	1960 onward
Knowledge economy	1980 onward



A Knowledge Economy is one that utilizes knowledge as the key engine of economic growth (World Bank, 2005).

Background: Knowledge Sharing

- Why, the increased interest now?

- Globalization.

- Erosion of barriers between nations: e.g. movement of capital, trade, labour, etc.*

- Knowledge economy.

- A Knowledge Economy is one that utilizes knowledge as the key engine of economic growth (World Bank, 2005).*

- Increased demand for better products and services.

- Technology – sophistication and proliferation.

- Increasing cost of knowledge loss.

- Valuable knowledge walks out of the organization when employees leave.
Knowledge sharing is among the more effective techniques to mitigate some of these losses.*

Background: Knowledge Sharing



Year: 2006

250,000 gallons of crude oil spills into Prudhoe Bay (Alaska).

NASA Manager confesses:

“If we want to go to the moon again, we’ll be starting from scratch because all of that knowledge has disappeared.”

NASA Officials Warn of Aging Workforce, Washington Post, March 7, 2003



KS PROGRAMMES

Examples of Knowledge Sharing Programmes

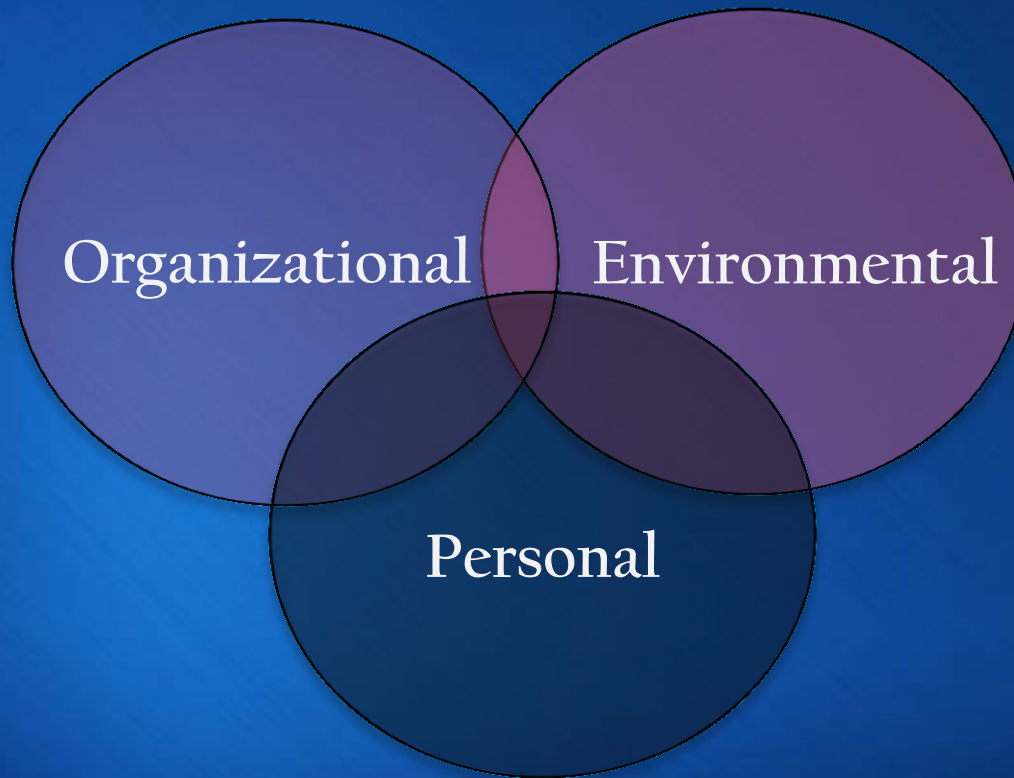
- Knowledge forums
- Knowledge repositories – online and hard copy
- Training/lectures
- Bootcamps
- Coaching/Mentoring
- Apprenticeship
- Attachment programmes
- Work teams – single/multi-disciplinary
- Knowledge Café / World Café
- Communities of practice
- Workplace Proximal positioning
- Knowledge networks - stimulation
- Apps – e.g. Directory of subject matter experts
- etc.



KS INFLUENCING FACTORS

KS Influencing Factors

■ Domains:



- Socio-economic
- Socio-political
- Socio-cultural

Literature

- **Leadership**

(Bock et al., 2005; Husted & Michailova, 2002; Li, Zhu, & Wang, 2010; Lin, Lee, & Wang, 2009; Zboralski, 2009).

- **Knowledge Network**

(Hansen, 2002; He, Qiao, & Wei, 2009; Kim & Lee, 2006; McDermott & Archibald, 2010; Schonstrom, 2005).

- **Information Technology**

(Choi, Lee, & Yoo, 2010; Huysman & Wulf, 2006; Kim & Lee, 2006; Lin, Lee, & Wang, 2009; Rhodes et al., 2008; Syed Ikhsan & Rowland, 2004)

- **Resources**

(Goffin & Koners 2011; Li, Zhu, & Wang, 2010)

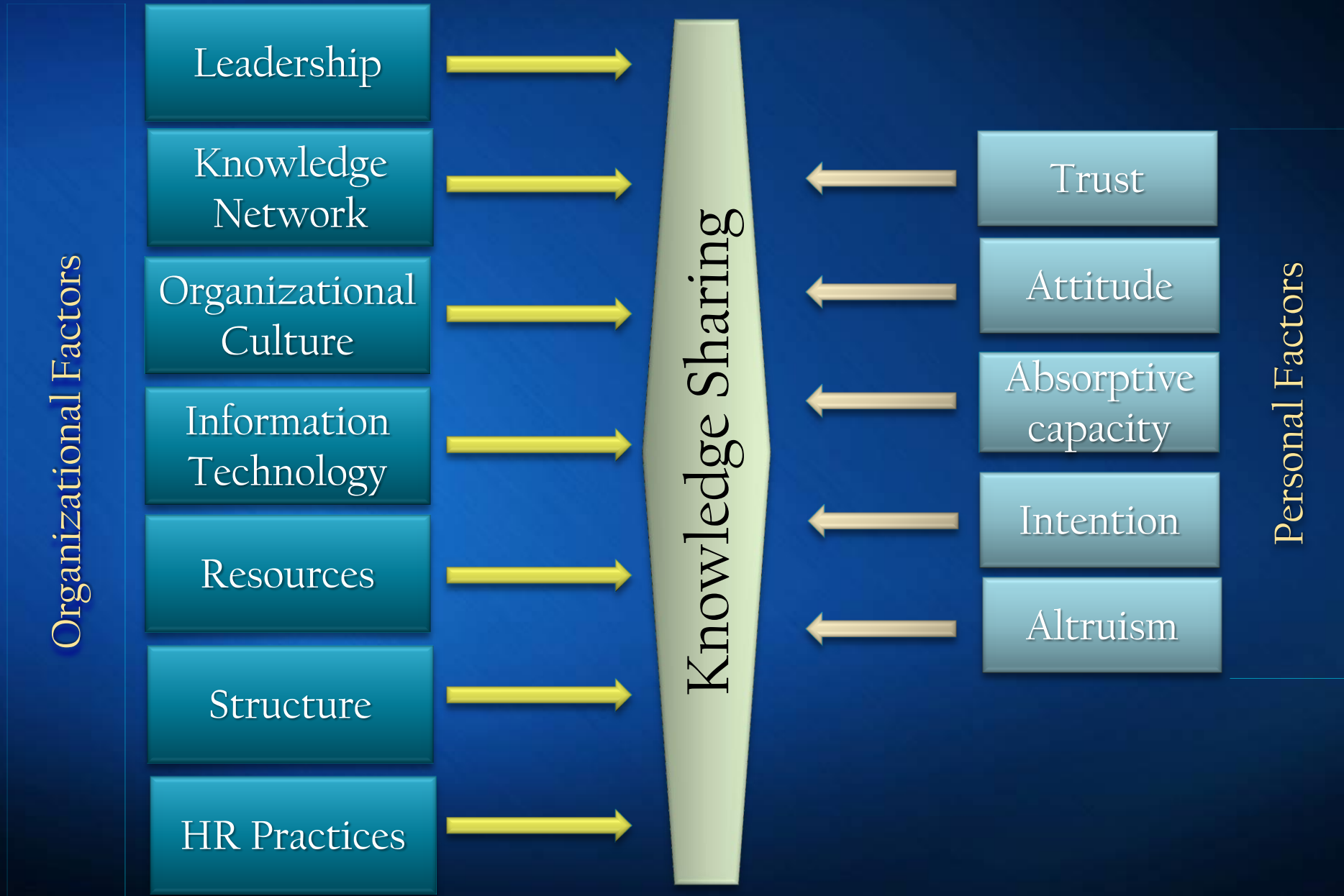
- **Structure**

(Lucas, 2010)

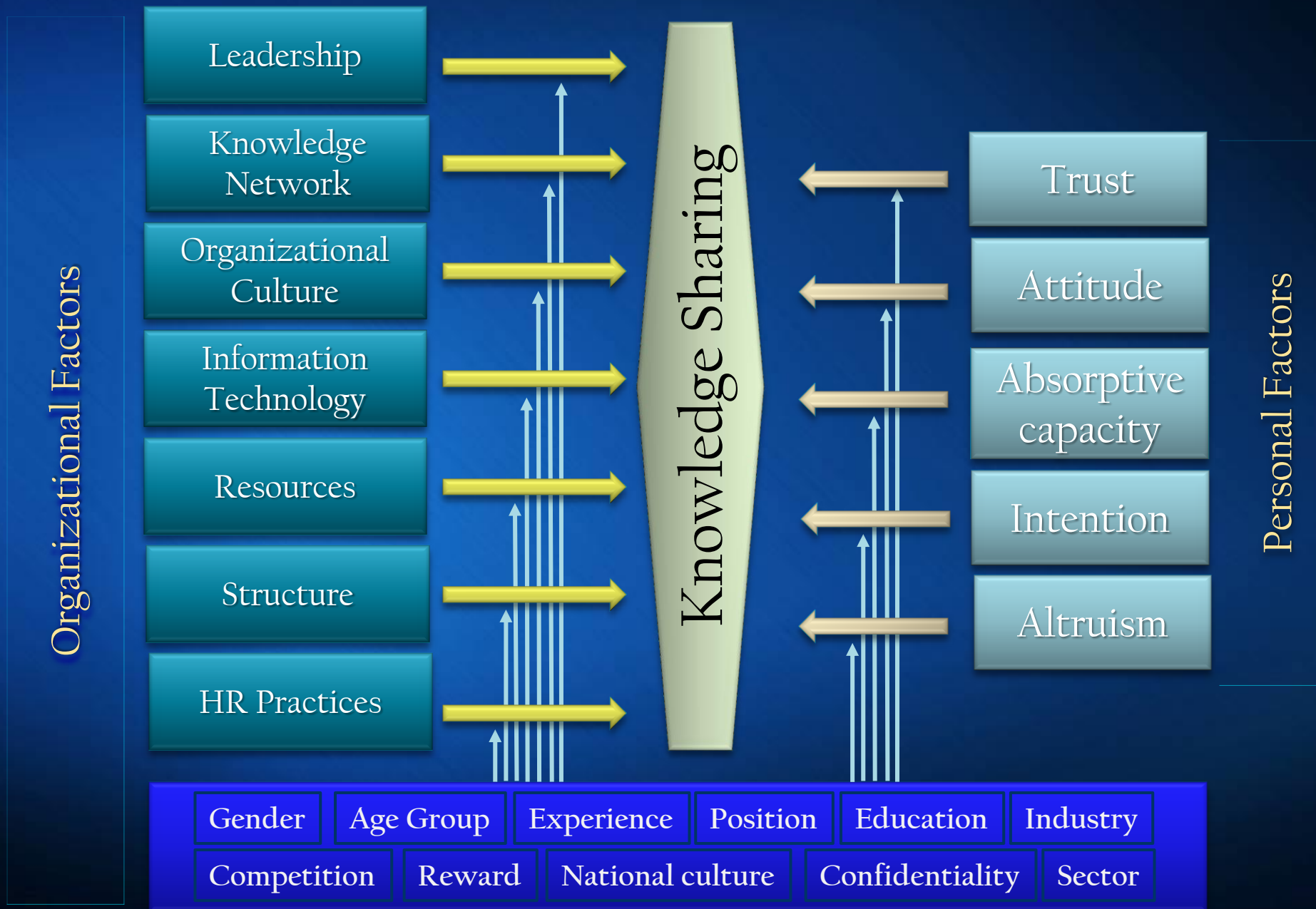
- **HR Practices**

(Bock et al., 2005; Hansen 2002; Husted & Michailova, 2002; Lin, 2007; Nan 2008)

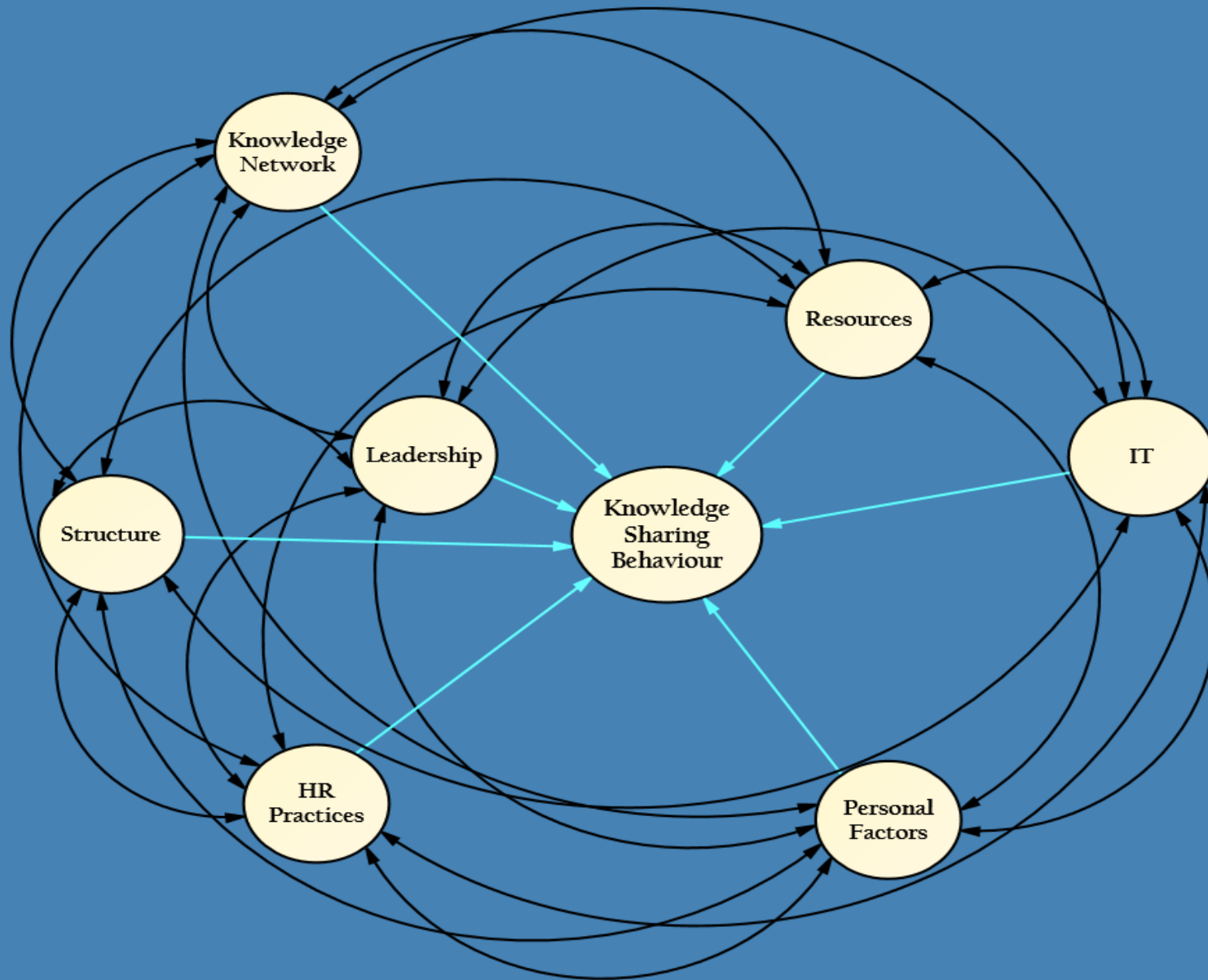
Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing



Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing



Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing



Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing

■ Factors: They are complex.

- Aggregate

Example:

Leadership



- Array (2nd dimension)

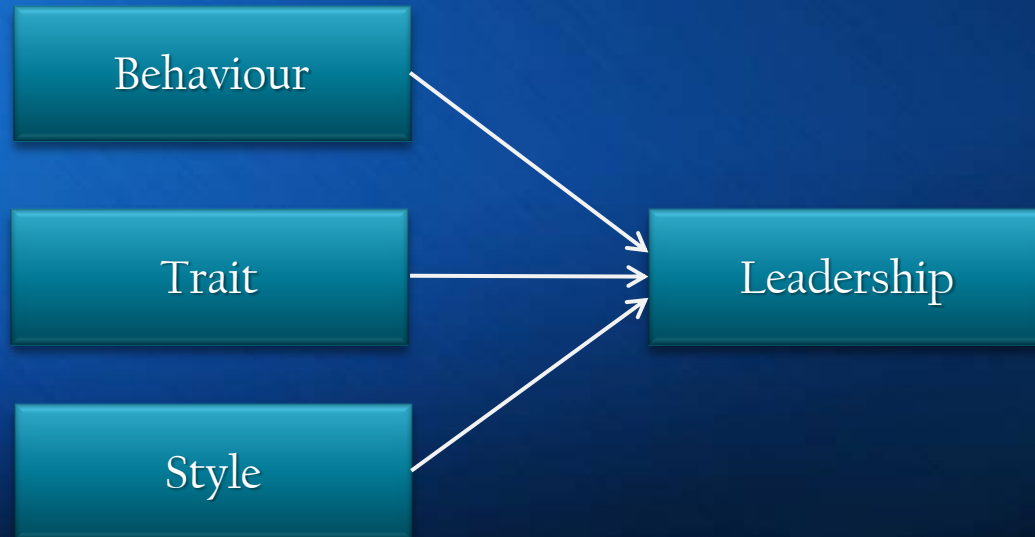
Example:

Behaviour

Trait

Style

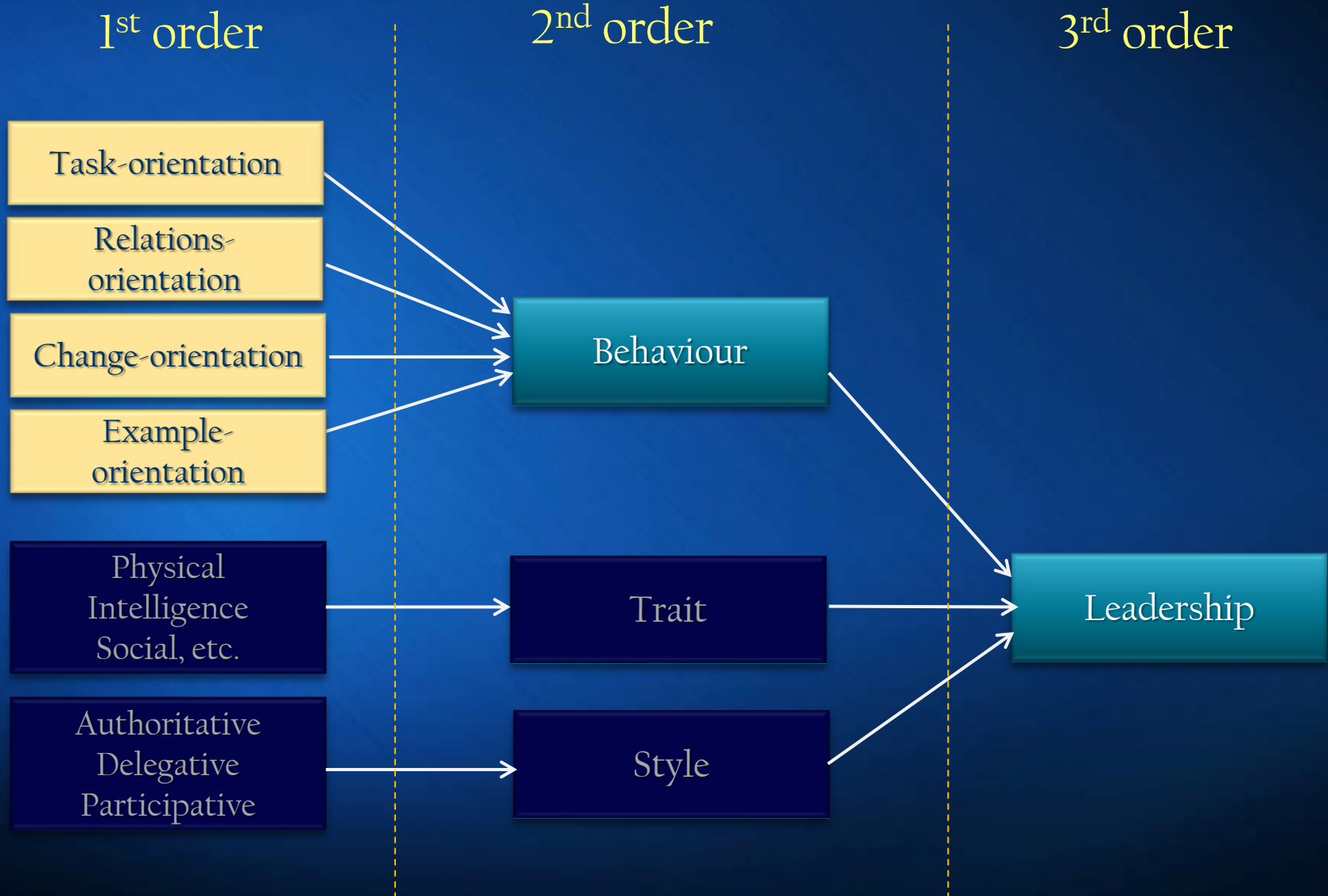
Leadership



Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing

- Matrix (3rd dimension)

Example:



Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing

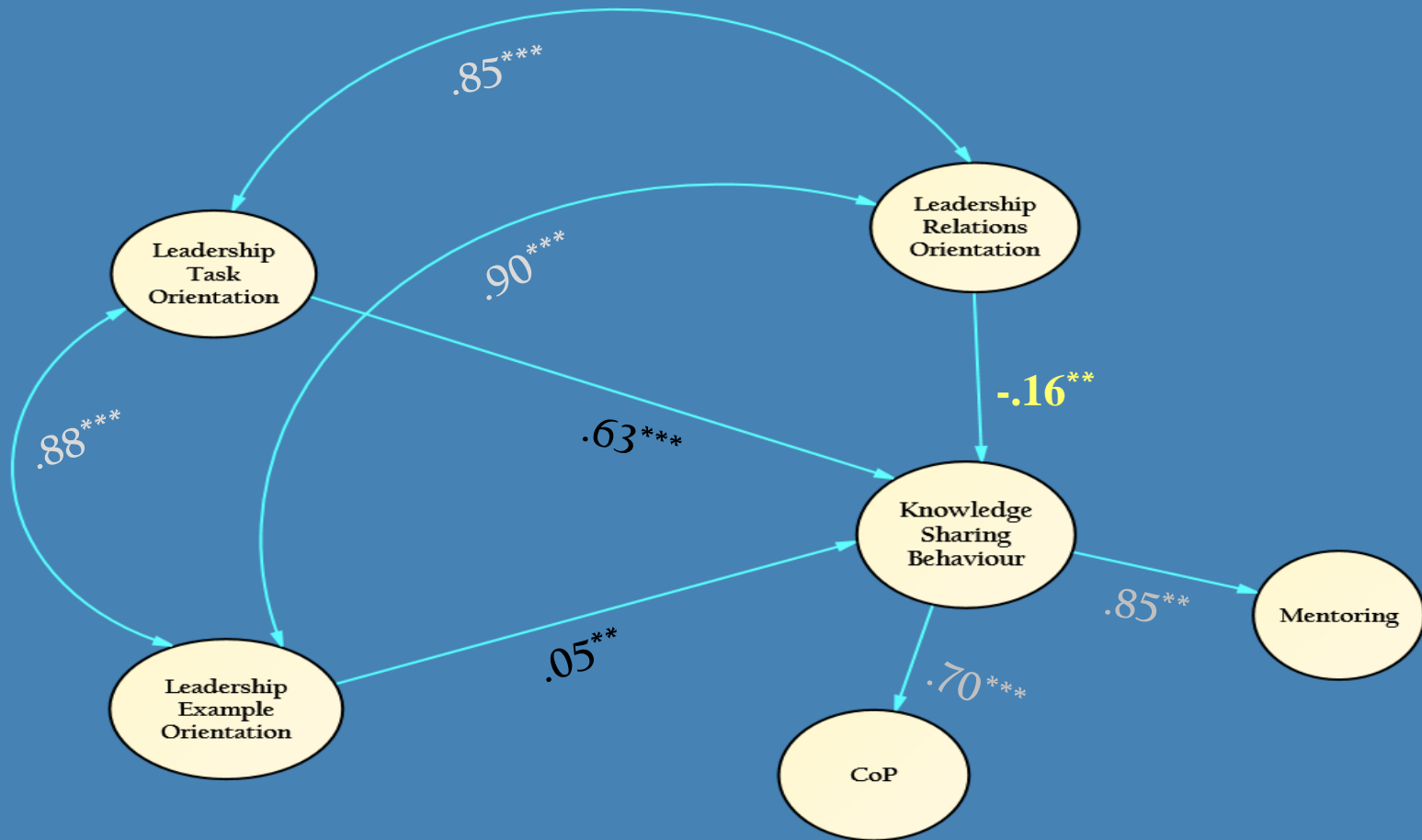
- Summary:
- Generally, organizational factors will influence KS.
- These factors do not typically operate in isolation. Be mindful of inter-factor dynamics.
- Most of these factors are multi-dimensional. They are aggregate constructs.
- Examining all the important factors collectively will provide useful insights during implementation.



EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Empirical Evidence

■ Results (n=282)



Empirical Evidence

- Path Coefficient





IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES

Knowledge Sharing: Suggested Implementation Approaches

Exploratory Approach

- Select one knowledge sharing practice per instance
- Study and understand the practice
- Assess its suitability to your organization
- Implement pragmatically
- Review progress & fine-tune implementation



Conservative Approach

- Select one or two knowledge sharing practice(s) per instance
- Study and understand these practices
- Assess their suitability to your organization
- Select one or two key KS influencing factors
- Identify and introduce changes to these factors which may improve their influence on knowledge sharing
- Implement
- Review progress & fine-tune implementation



Knowledge Sharing: Suggested Implementation Approaches

Analytical Approach

- Select one or two knowledge sharing practice(s) per instance
- Study and understand these practices
- Establish their suitability to your organization
- Identify and analyze all key KS influencing factors
- Examine the organizational culture
- Identify and introduce changes to all relevant KS influencing factors in order to improve their influence
- Tailor relevant attributes of the selected knowledge sharing practice in line with the leadership support, strategy(s), culture, and resources of the organization
- Implement
- Review progress & fine-tune implementation



RANDOM REFLECTIONS

Random Reflections: Implementing KS Programmes

- Don't expect people to embrace KS* readily.
- Don't expect rapid return-on-investments.
- KS programmes will not usually fail; they will largely show varying degrees of success.
- KS implementation-capabilities-development curve is steep. One has to persevere.
- Ignoring influencing factors completely means, one is: (i) highly optimistic; and/or (ii) a strong believer in luck.

* KS programmes introduced by the organization

Thank You





APPENDICES



KS:

BARRIERS/IMPEDIMENTS

Knowledge Sharing Barriers/Impediments

- General lack of time:
 - to share knowledge;
 - to identify and assist co-workers in need of knowledge.
- Fear of loss of expert power
- Lack appreciation of the value of knowledge
- Lack of avenues for personal interactions
- Challenges – articulating knowledge
 - inadequate communication skills;
 - inability to articulate.

Knowledge Sharing Barriers/Impediments

■ Barriers/Impediments

- Trust deficit
- Structure - knowledge silos
- Organizational culture
- Inadequate leadership support
- Under-developed knowledge networks
- Inadequate resources
- Absorptive capacity of knowledge workers



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Factor : Leadership

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Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing

Factor : Organizational Culture

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Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing

Factor : Other Organizational Factors/Practices

Incentives

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Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing

Factor : Resources

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Factor : Knowledge workers

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Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing

Factor : Knowledge Network

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Factors Which Influence Knowledge Sharing

Factor : Knowledge Workers

Attitude

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