FACTORS INFLUENCING MANAGERIAL DECISION-MAKING EFFECTIVENESS IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CONTEXT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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Abstract: ***This study examines the paradoxical role of knowledge sharing in enhancing the effectiveness of managerial decision-making during digital transformation in Vietnam. Using the PLS-SEM method with 299 employees and managers from enterprises undergoing digital transformation, the study finds that, paradoxically, increased knowledge sharing has a negative impact on decision-making effectiveness, contrary to conventional expectations that more knowledge sharing improves decision-making.***

• Keywords: *knowledge sharing; decision-making effectiveness; digital transformation; PLS-SEM.*

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1. Introduction

Digital transformation is fundamentally altering organizational operations and decision-making on a global scale. The unprecedented surge of digital information in recent years has fundamentally transformed the process of knowledge sharing. Previous research has typically emphasized the positive role of knowledge sharing in enhancing decision quality by enabling the synthesis of multidimensional information and leveraging collective intelligence. However, the digital age's data explosion raises important questions about whether more knowledge sharing always leads to better decisions. Recent systematic reviews indicate that exponential digital information growth commonly triggers information overload, affecting decision-making, productivity, and overall well-being. Does increased knowledge sharing always lead to more effective decisions in digital environments, or might it also introduce negative effects that remain underexplored?

Section 2 presents the theoretical framework and hypothesis development; Section 3 covers methodology; Section 4 presents results and discussion; Section 5 discusses theoretical and practical implications; Section 6 provides conclusions.

2. Theoretical framework and hypothesis development

2.1. Theoretical framework

Resource-based view: The resource-based view (RBV) posits that sustainable competitive advantage arises from resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). Within digital transformation contexts, organizational knowledge, particularly the tacit expertise of highly skilled professionals, constitutes a critical strategic asset. Recent research demonstrates that digital transformation significantly influences knowledge management system development and effectiveness, enabling organizations to enhance innovation performance and competitive advantage. However, research extends RBV by investigating circumstances in which knowledge resources remain unshared due to individual motivations or organizational barriers, resulting in paradoxical outcomes where valuable resources fail to generate anticipated value.

Social exchange theory: Social exchange theory posits that organizational relationships are governed by cost-benefit trade-off principles (Blau, 2017). Individuals engage in knowledge sharing when they anticipate receiving commensurate benefits, such as recognition, trust, and support. Recent empirical evidence demonstrates that organizational trust and perceived organizational support enhance knowledge-sharing motivation by strengthening reciprocity expectations (Chen et al., 2025). Both relational and structural social capital positively influence knowledge management processes, thereby facilitating knowledge-sharing behaviors. Nevertheless, within digital transformation contexts characterized by heightened competition, rapid technological change, and evolving work arrangements, the calculus surrounding the

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costs and benefits of knowledge sharing undergoes substantial modification, generating novel dynamics warranting investigation.

Information processing theory: Information processing theory posits that organizations possess finite information processing capacity, whereby decision-making effectiveness depends on the balance between information requirements and processing capabilities (Galbraith, 1973). In the digital era, information collection and dissemination capacity have expanded exponentially, precipitating widespread information overload that adversely affects decision-making quality, productivity, and employee well-being. Contemporary research demonstrates that excessive information delays decisions and compromises decision-making efficacy through cognitive overload mechanisms. This theoretical framework provides a foundation for understanding the potential adverse effects of knowledge sharing on decision-making effectiveness in digital organizational contexts, particularly when information volume exceeds cognitive processing capacity.

2.2. Concepts

Professional competence

Professional competence (PC) encompasses specialized knowledge, technical skills, and problem-solving abilities acquired through education, training, and practical experience (Ericsson, 2006). In digital contexts, this extends to the capacity to utilize digital technologies for analyzing, selecting, and evaluating data to investigate work-related problems and build collaborative knowledge bases. Within digital transformation environments, professional competence encompasses both technical expertise and the ability to leverage information technology for organizational value creation. However, expert knowledge transfer remains critical for knowledge management, particularly as organizations recognize the risks associated with concentrating critical knowledge among limited personnel.

Process formalization

Process formalization (PF) refers to the degree to which organizational policies, procedures, and work processes are documented, standardized, and explicitly articulated to guide employee behavior and ensure operational consistency (Pertusa-Ortega et al., 2010a). Research demonstrates that bureaucratic structures and procedures impede network flexibility and knowledge flow. Recent evidence indicates that excessive formalization inhibits the relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and organizational performance by imposing undue constraints (Mustafa et al., 2022). In rapidly evolving digital environments, traditional process rigidity constitutes a significant barrier to the flexible information flow required for digital transformation.

Organizational trust

Organizational trust (OT) represents a psychological state whereby individuals willingly rely on organizational actions and colleague behaviors with positive expectations regarding their intentions and competence (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust plays a foundational role in social exchange relationships, as exchanges presume confidence between participating parties. Trust facilitates the open exchange of ideas and expertise, reducing perceived risks associated with knowledge disclosure. Recent research demonstrates that interpersonal trust significantly influences organizational commitment, knowledge-sharing behaviors, and creative performance. Within digital transformation contexts, trust assumes heightened importance as organizational trust and digital trust, confidence in digital platforms, processes, and protection mechanisms, jointly influence knowledge sharing through technology-mediated channels (Chen et al., 2025)

Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing (KS) constitutes the process whereby individuals exchange explicit and tacit knowledge with organizational members to create new organizational knowledge and capabilities (Nonaka, 2009). Knowledge management processes enhance employee engagement, operational effectiveness, and organizational learning while serving as critical enablers for data-driven decision-making and digital transformation initiatives. Contemporary research emphasizes that knowledge sharing occurs through multiple technological channels in digital contexts, requiring organizations to balance knowledge accessibility with information quality and relevance. However, digital transformation can complicate knowledge management by exponentially increasing data volumes, necessitating sophisticated filtering, organizing, and comprehension mechanisms to prevent information overload.

Decision-making effectiveness

Decision-making effectiveness (DME) represents the degree to which management decisions achieve desired objectives promptly, utilizing accurate and appropriate information while optimizing

organizational resources (Dean & Sharfman, 1996a). Information overload impairs decision quality, reduces productivity, and increases cognitive pressure. Excessive information can induce decision fatigue, anxiety, and choice paradox, hindering optimal decision-making. With global data projected to expand from 149 zettabytes in 2024 to 394 zettabytes by 2028, information processing challenges will continue to intensify.

2.3. Hypothesis development

2.3.1. Relationship between professional competence and knowledge sharing

Although intuition suggests that employees with high professional competence share more knowledge due to possessing valuable expertise, empirical evidence reveals a paradoxical relationship. Highly competent individuals often develop psychological ownership over their specialized knowledge, perceiving it as a personal competitive advantage requiring protection. This psychological ownership manifests through territorial feelings wherein experts view certain domains of knowledge as their proprietary territory, leading to knowledge-hiding behaviors aimed at preserving power, status, and competitive positioning (Connelly et al., 2012). Research demonstrates that knowledge territoriality, characterized by possessive attitudes toward knowledge domains, significantly inhibits knowledge-sharing behaviors while simultaneously reducing the knowledge holder's creative performance and collaborative effectiveness.

This paradox becomes particularly pronounced in competitive organizational environments where highly skilled employees face conflicting pressures: they are expected to share knowledge for organizational development while simultaneously needing to protect their expertise to maintain personal status and job security. Empirical evidence suggests that stronger feelings of psychological ownership may lead employees to conceal knowledge from colleagues, particularly under conditions of avoidance motivation or perceived threat. Furthermore, in knowledge-intensive contexts, experts who have invested substantial time, effort, and resources in acquiring complex specialized knowledge exhibit higher reluctance to share this knowledge, viewing such hoarding as necessary for preserving their unique value proposition within the organization. Consequently, this research proposes that professional competence negatively affects knowledge-sharing behaviors in competitive digital transformation environments. Based on this theoretical and empirical evidence, this study proposes:

H1: Professional competence negatively impacts knowledge sharing.

2.3.2. Relationship between process formalization and knowledge sharing

Process formalization, traditionally expected to facilitate knowledge sharing through clear mechanisms and standardized procedures, may paradoxically produce counterproductive effects in contemporary organizational contexts. Empirical evidence from European enterprises reveals a significant negative correlation between formalization levels and employee innovation capacity, demonstrating that as formalization increases through detailed rules and written guidelines, employees' willingness to proactively share novel ideas systematically decreases. This negative relationship stems from formalization's tendency to create bureaucratic constraints that restrict flexibility in knowledge flows and reduce employees' perceived autonomy.

The structural inertia induced by formalization manifests through rigid procedural adherence that prioritizes rule compliance over proactive knowledge contribution, thereby transforming knowledge-sharing from an intrinsically motivated collaborative behavior into a mechanistic obligation distinguish between enabling and coercive formalization, suggesting that well-designed formal systems can facilitate knowledge orchestration, research in digital transformation contexts indicates that bureaucratic dimensions frequently dominate, creating restrictions on spontaneous knowledge-exchange behaviors essential for innovation and adaptation. Consequently, this research proposes that process formalization negatively affects knowledge-sharing behaviors in organizations undergoing digital transformation, where flexibility and informal collaboration are paramount.. Based on this theoretical and empirical evidence, this study proposes:

H2: Process formalization negatively impacts knowledge sharing.

2.3.3. Relationship between organizational trust and knowledge sharing

Organizational trust is considered critical for promoting knowledge-sharing behavior. A comprehensive evidence synthesis by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development examining 56 empirical studies demonstrates that inter-organizational trust positively impacts cooperation, partnership, joint problem-solving, knowledge acquisition, and information-sharing outcomes. The research found

evidence that trust at different organizational levels is positively correlated, suggesting that organizational-level trust cascades to individual interactions and creates enabling conditions for knowledge exchange across hierarchical boundaries.

Recent research on virtual teams reveals that colleague trust positively impacts knowledge-sharing behavior through psychological safety mediation. The study demonstrated that high-trust environments enable safer knowledge sharing even in remote contexts characterized by information security risks and limited supervision. The psychological safety mechanism proves particularly critical in digital transformation contexts where traditional face-to-face trust-building opportunities are diminished. Employees who trust their coworkers perceive reduced interpersonal risks associated with knowledge contribution, thereby increasing willingness to share both explicit and tacit knowledge through digital platforms.

The concept of digital trust has emerged as increasingly important in transformation contexts. ISACA's state of digital trust 2024 report (ISACA, 2024), survey of over 5,800 digital trust professionals globally emphasizes that organizations with high digital trust more successfully implement digital transformation initiatives, including effective knowledge-sharing cultures. The report found that 78% of respondents agree that digital trust is crucial to digital transformation success, with 81% indicating that organizations demonstrating commitment to digital trust will be more successful. However, concerning gaps persist, as only 53% express confidence in their organization's digital trustworthiness, highlighting the critical need for organizations to prioritize trust-building mechanisms to facilitate knowledge-sharing behaviors in digital environments. Consequently, this research proposes that organizational trust positively affects knowledge-sharing behaviors in digital transformation contexts. Based on social exchange theory and this empirical evidence, this study proposes:

H3: Organizational trust positively impacts knowledge sharing.

2.3.4. Relationship between knowledge sharing and decision-making effectiveness

Traditional perspectives posit that knowledge sharing positively impacts decision-making effectiveness by providing comprehensive information and diverse perspectives. However, in the digital age characterized by exponential information growth, this relationship requires reconsideration. Information processing theory suggests that organizations possess finite information processing capacity; when information volume exceeds this capacity, decision-making effectiveness may decline rather than improve.

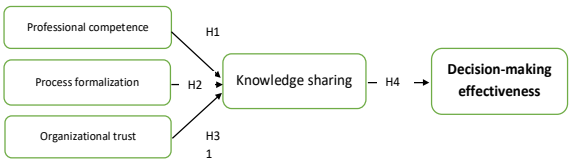
In high-pressure management contexts, decision-makers overwhelmed with excessive information may revert to habitual responses, delay critical actions, or commit errors due to cognitive fatigue. With global data projected to expand dramatically in the coming years, information processing challenges will intensify. The relationship between knowledge sharing and decision-making effectiveness may thus be non-linear or inverted U-shaped, where beyond a certain threshold, additional information degrades rather than improves decision quality. Consequently, this research proposes that knowledge sharing negatively affects decision-making effectiveness when information volume exceeds organizational processing capacity in digital transformation contexts. Based on theory and empirical evidence on digital-age information overload, this study proposes:

H4: Knowledge sharing negatively impacts decision-making effectiveness.

2.4. Proposed research model

Based on the theoretical reasoning and hypothesis development presented above, this study proposes an integrated research model (Figure 1) reflecting relationships in organizational knowledge management.

Figure 1: Research model



3. Research methodology

This study employs a quantitative cross-sectional design to test paradoxical relationships in organizational knowledge management. Research subjects are employees and managers who regularly participate in knowledge sharing and decision-making activities, ensuring sufficient understanding of organizational culture and knowledge management processes for accurate feedback.

All constructs were operationalized using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"). Professional Competence (PC), Process Formalization (PF), Organizational Trust (OT), Knowledge Sharing (KS), and Decision-Making Effectiveness (DME) were each measured using three

adapted items. The study controlled for demographic variables, including gender, age, education, work experience, job position, enterprise type, company size, and industry.

Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM software. Observed variable quality was assessed through outer loadings ≥ 0.7, and scale reliability through Cronbach's alpha (α ≥ 0.70). Convergent validity was evaluated via: (1) standardized loadings ≥ 0.50 ($p < 0.001$); (2) average variance extracted (AVE) ≥ 0.50; and (3) composite reliability (CR) ≥ 0.70. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (square root of AVE exceeds inter-construct correlations). Multicollinearity was examined via the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF < 5).

Following measurement model validation, the structural model was evaluated using PLS-SEM with bootstrapping to estimate path coefficients, t-statistics, and significance levels, thereby testing research hypotheses.

4. Research results and discussion

4.1. Sample characteristics

The final sample comprises 299 valid responses from employees and managers across Vietnamese industries, demonstrating diversity in age, education, work experience, and organizational position. Gender distribution is relatively balanced (52.8% male, 47.2% female). The majority of respondents (68.2%) are aged 25-40, consistent with professionals actively engaged in digital transformation. Educational attainment is high: 74.9% hold bachelor's degrees, 24.1% master's degrees, reflecting typical knowledge worker credentials in digital transformation contexts.

Organizational positions include staff-level employees (38.5%), managers (61,5%), ensuring adequate representation of decision-makers and participants in organizational decision-making. Work experience ranges from 1-3 years (32.4%), 3-5 years (28.1%), 5-10 years (26.8%), to over 10 years (12.7%), capturing perspectives from both recent hires experiencing current digital transformation.

Industry representation includes information technology (28.4%), financial services (19.4%), manufacturing (15.7%), education (12.0%), healthcare (8.7%), retail and e-commerce (7.4%), and other sectors (8.4%), enhancing generalizability across organizational contexts undergoing digital transformation. Organizational size distribution spans small enterprises under 50 employees (31.1%), medium enterprises 50-250 employees (38.8%), and large enterprises over 250 employees (30.1%), providing insights across different transformation implementation stages and scales.

4.2. Assessment of the measurement model

Assessment of indicator quality: Table 1 shows that all outer loadings exceed the 0.70 threshold, ranging from 0.720 to 0.965, indicating observed variables adequately explain their corresponding latent constructs.

Table 1. Results of outer loadings

	DME	KS	OT	PC	PF
DME1	0.740				
DME2	0.872				
DME3	0.890				
KS1		0.816			
KS2		0.810			
KS3		0.777			
OT1			0.903		
OT2			0.858		
OT3			0.904		
PC1				0.907	
PC2				0.720	
PC3				0.965	
PF1					0.824
PF2					0.890
PF3					0.762

Source: Analysis results from SmartPLS

Reliability and convergent validity: Cronbach's alpha coefficients range from 0.730 to 0.867, exceeding the 0.70 threshold and confirming good internal reliability. Average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceeds 0.50 (range: 0.642-0.789), indicating observed variables converge well and explain over 50% of latent construct variance. Composite reliability (CR) ranges from 0.843 to 0.918, substantially exceeding the 0.70 benchmark and demonstrating high internal consistency. All reliability and convergent validity criteria are satisfied, confirming measurement model quality (Analysis results from SmartPLS)

Discriminant validity: Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The square root of AVE exceeds all inter-construct correlations (below-diagonal values), ranging from 0.801 to 0.888, confirming that each construct is distinct from others in the model (Analysis results from SmartPLS).

Multicollinearity Assessment: Multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). All VIF values range from 1.365 to 4.391, below the threshold of 5, indicating no serious multicollinearity among model variables and ensuring estimate accuracy in PLS-SEM analysis (Analysis results from SmartPLS).

Assessment of the Model's Explanatory Power (R^2): The R^2 values (Table 2) indicate that the model explains 46.4% of the variance in KS, reflecting a moderate explanatory power, while only 16% of the variance in DME is explained, indicating a weak but acceptable level of explanation. Given the behavioral characteristics of DME and the complexity of digital transformation processes, such R^2 values are consistent with prior research in social science–oriented PLS-SEM studies.

Table 2: Results of the assessment of the model's explanatory power

(Coefficient of Determination - R^2)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
DME	0.160	0.157
KS	0.464	0.459

Source: Analysis results from SmartPLS

4.3. Testing the research hypotheses

Following measurement model validation, the structural model was evaluated to test hypotheses using bootstrapping with 1,000 resamples to estimate path coefficients and assess statistical significance. Table 3 presents hypothesis test results.

Table 3. Results of hypothesis testing

	Original Sample (O) - β	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Results
KS -> DME	-0.400	-0.406	0.053	7.525	**0.000**	Suported
OT -> KS	0.773	0.767	0.081	9.543	**0.000**	Suported
PC -> KS	-0.148	-0.148	0.070	2.116	**0.035**	Suported
PF -> KS	-0.235	-0.224	0.094	2.506	**0.012**	Suported

Source: Analysis results from SmartPLS

Impact of knowledge sharing on decision-making effectiveness

Results reveal a significant paradox: knowledge sharing negatively impacts decision-making effectiveness ($\beta = -0.400$, $p < 0.001$), contrary to traditional expectations that knowledge sharing universally benefits organizations, particularly in digital transformation contexts. This finding is theoretically significant and reflects contemporary organizational realities in the digital age. Information processing theory explains this finding through information overload in digital environments. Exponential digital information growth creates widespread overload, negatively affecting decision-making, productivity, and worker wellbeing. Overwhelmed decision-makers revert to habitual responses, delay critical actions, or commit errors due to cognitive fatigue. In high-pressure environments requiring rapid responses, cognitive overload impairs judgment, causing missed warning signs, poor risk assessment, and costly consequences (Bawden & Robinson, 2020).

Impact of organizational trust on knowledge sharing

The study confirms the strong positive role of organizational trust in knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.773$, $p < 0.001$). This result aligns with social exchange theory and is reinforced by numerous recent studies in the digital transformation context. In the digital transformation context, digital trust is becoming an important concept. Digital trust, characterized by confidence in digital platforms and processes, protection of best interests, availability of adequate expertise, and protection from threats, directly enhances knowledge sharing and open innovation. Although trust is a critical factor promoting knowledge sharing, many organizations have not invested sufficiently in building and maintaining trust in digital environments (Chen et al., 2025).

Impact of professional competence on knowledge sharing

The research identifies a significant negative relationship between professional competence and knowledge sharing ($\beta = -0.148$, $p < 0.05$). This counterintuitive finding reveals that higher levels of professional competence paradoxically inhibit knowledge sharing behaviors. Within digital transformation environments characterized by intense competition and rapid technological change, highly competent experts may perceive their specialized professional knowledge as a critical personal competitive advantage requiring protection. This protective behavior stems from what knowledge management scholars term 'knowledge hiding', the intentional concealment or withholding of requested knowledge from colleagues (Connelly et al., 2012). When employees perceive their expertise as their primary source of organizational value and job security, they become reluctant to share this knowledge, particularly in contexts marked by employment uncertainty or internal competition. Empirical evidence demonstrates that job insecurity significantly increases knowledge hiding behavior, as employees seek to maintain their competitive advantage and perceived indispensability within the organization (Nguyen et al., 2022). In highly competitive digital transformation contexts where automation and artificial intelligence threaten traditional job roles, these concerns become particularly salient.

Impact of process formalization on knowledge sharing

Another critical finding reveals the negative impact of process formalization on knowledge sharing (β

= -0.235, $p < 0.05$). This result assumes particular significance within digital transformation contexts, where organizations must navigate the fundamental tension between standardization imperatives and flexibility requirements. The finding aligns with contemporary research examining the complex relationship between bureaucratic structures and collaborative governance in 21st-century organizations. Formalization, in conjunction with complexity and centralization, can negatively affect knowledge management performance. In digital transformation environments characterized by rapid change and continuous innovation demands, the rigidity inherent in traditional formalized processes can constitute a serious impediment to flexible, spontaneous knowledge exchange (Mustafa et al., 2022).

5. Theoretical and practical implications

This study makes three important theoretical contributions. First, it extends information processing theory by demonstrating an inverted U-shaped relationship between information and decision-making effectiveness in the digital age. After a critical threshold, additional information reduces rather than enhances decision quality through cognitive overload mechanisms. Second, the study extends social exchange theory by showing that cost-benefit calculations of knowledge sharing become more complex in digital transformation contexts, requiring new forms of digital trust that encompass technological, procedural, and systemic dimensions beyond traditional interpersonal trust. Third, it enriches resource-based view theory by identifying conditions where valuable resources high professional competence and process formalization may paradoxically impede knowledge sharing, particularly in rapidly changing digital environments. This challenges the assumption that superior resources automatically translate to effective resource utilization.

The research provides four critical implications for managers. First, organizations should strategically manage information quality and flow rather than merely encouraging more knowledge sharing. Incorporating AI and intelligent technologies is now the top priority for knowledge management teams, with the goal of effectively curating and filtering information rather than creating additional volume. Second, organizations must invest in building digital trust as a foundation for effective knowledge sharing. When executive leadership actively advocates for digital trust, it cascades into enhanced prioritization, budget allocation, training programs, and technical resources that overcome key implementation challenges. Third, organizations need to balance maintaining high professional competence with encouraging knowledge sharing through appropriate incentive mechanisms, supportive cultures, and comprehensive development programs. Change management continues as the paramount skill for knowledge management teams when implementing new approaches. Finally, organizations must reconsider process formalization levels to ensure necessary flexibility in digital environments. While some standardization remains essential, excessive formalization hinders natural knowledge flows and rapid adaptation, critical success factors for digital transformation.

6. Conclusion

This article sheds light on an important paradox in knowledge management in the digital age: knowledge sharing, often regarded as the key to organizational efficiency, can lead to information overload and reduce decision-making effectiveness if not managed properly. This finding points to a more balanced and strategic approach to knowledge management in the context of digital transformation, where the quality of information and the ability to process it are just as crucial as the quantity of knowledge shared. This research not only contributes to the theoretical foundation of knowledge management and digital transformation but also provides valuable practical guidance for managers navigating their organizations through the profound changes of the digital era. In an increasingly complex and uncertain world, the ability to manage knowledge effectively will be the distinguishing factor between thriving organizations and those that fall behind.

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