

Decrypting the Motive: A Descriptive Phenomenological Study of Students’ Knowledge Sharing Motivation

Michael Jarito Froilan

Laoang National High School, Division of Northern Samar, Department Of Education

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Abstract- Sharing knowledge not just led to improved learning on the part of the receiver, rather, the knowledge giver could also benefit from it. This descriptive phenomenological study delved into knowledge sharing motivation of students under the Curricular Program for Science, Technology, and Engineering at Laoang National High School. Ten purposively sampled informants participated in focus group discussion with three follow-up semi-structured interview the data from which were analysed through Colaizzi (1978) method. Results indicated that communal relationship, selflessness, and no-one-gets-left-behind mantra emerged as the most predominant themes which also reflected certain noteworthy Filipino values. This direction could point to researches which unravel novel knowledge sharing activities that further polished the critical thinking skills of students.

Index Terms- Education, knowledge sharing, motivation, descriptive phenomenology, Colaizzi method

I. INTRODUCTION

The Curricular Program for Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE) was instituted to produce high school graduates who are highly responsible, morally upright, globally competitive, and work-ready learners (DECS Order 54, 1996; DepEd Order 41, 2004; DepEd Order 55, 2010). As one of the implementing schools, Laoang National High School has been producing STE graduates but not without challenges. The outcome of the program evaluation showed that on average, only half of the student entrants were able to finish the program four years later (Froilan, 2017). To this end, the researcher felt the need to develop an in-depth understanding of students’ knowledge sharing motivations as it was observed by greater number of teachers that they share information and teach their classmates at different degrees for varied reasons. They shared knowledge, tacit or explicit (Nonaka, 1998) in the form of information during recitation, when they make projects, and just any other instances where someone asked for help with their studies. Uncovering their unique motives could help teachers redesign learning activities hence improve performance.

II. RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

This descriptive phenomenological study (Husserl, 2001) involved ten purposively sampled students under the Curricular

Program for Science, Technology, and Engineering. A focus group discussion with a follow-up semi-structured interview was used to gather data which then analysed through Colaizzi (1978) framework comprising seven significant steps.

Step 1. The transcripts from the focus group discussion and follow up semi-structured interviews were read several times for the researcher to emerge himself into the real life experiences of the informants. Through this whole process, he identified prior knowledge and bracketed them to devoid the present study from personal bias.

Step 2. Statements identified to be significant were extracted and labelled with transcript number, page, and line numbers so that it could be traced easily. A colleague examined and filtered these statements. There were twenty significant statements which were narrowed down to fifteen statements after the review.

Table 1. Significant Statements Sample

Significant Statements	Transcript No.	Page	Line
<i>Occasionally, I only select who to teach. And most preferably <u>close friends</u>.</i>	1	7	117
<i>Even if it’s already night time, <u>I really go to her house just to give assistance about our assignment or sometimes project.</u></i>	2	4	86-88
<i>Some of us <u>share their knowledge in exchange of snacks.</u></i>	1	10	146
<i>Before, someone lent me her ballpen. One time, she asked, “How do I answer this?” Of course, <u>I taught her because of what she did in the past.</u></i>	3	5	112-115
<i>“The important thing is I’m able to share my knowledge. When s/he learns, <u>I feel great</u>”</i>	1	9	125-126

<i>that I'm able to help."</i>			
<i>Not only do I feel a sense of satisfaction when they learn from me. It also helps boost my self-confidence.</i>	1	9	129
<i>I teach...so that the whole section doesn't get dismantled or non of us gets transferred to regular class.</i>	1	10	145-148
<i>Even when someone did not help in writing the script because of family problem, we still included her so that she also obtain a passing grade.</i>	1	11	160-162
<i>It breaks my heart when someone gets knocked out of the program.</i>	1	11	150-151

Step 3. Significant statements were accorded meanings which were the basis for the coding process. These meanings were examined thoroughly by a colleague who specializes in language. As a result, some of the fifteen meanings were revised and improved. Sample significant statements and meanings are given below.

Table 2. Formulated Meanings Samples

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings
<i>Occasionally, I only select who to teach. And most preferably close friends.</i> (Transcript 1, page 7, line 117)	Students share knowledge because the receiver is a close friend.
<i>Even if it's already night time, I really go to her house just to give assistance about our assignment or sometimes project.</i> (Transcript 2, page 4, line 86-88)	Students are willing to go at great lengths to help classmates over their learning activities.
<i>Some of us share their knowledge in exchange of snacks.</i> (Transcript 1, page 10, line 146)	Students tutor their classmates for food.
<i>Before, someone lent me her ballpen. One time, she asked, "How do I answer this?" Of course, I taught her because of what she did in the past.</i> (Transcript 3, page 5, line	Students share knowledge as a way to give back the favors they receive.

112-115)	
<i>The important thing is I'm able to share my knowledge. When s/he learns, I feel great that I'm able to help.</i> (Transcript 1, page 9, line 125-126)	Students share knowledge just for the sake of helping and nothing more; no expectations nor something in return
<i>Not only do I feel a sense of satisfaction when they learn from me. It also helps boost my self-confidence.</i> (Transcript 1, page 9, line 129)	Students enjoy being able to teach their classmates.
<i>I teach...so that the whole section doesn't get dismantled or non of us gets transferred to regular class.</i> (Transcript 1, page 10, line 145-148)	Students share knowledge as their way of making sure that no one gets knocked out from the program.
<i>Even when someone did not help in writing the script because of family problem, we still included her so that she also obtain a passing grade.</i> (Transcript 1, page 11, line 160-162)	Even without contribution, students are made part of the project to make sure all get a passing grade.
<i>It breaks my heart when someone gets knocked out of the program.</i> (Transcript 1, page 11, line 150-151)	Students feel sorry when someone gets knocked out of the program.

Step 4. The researcher examined carefully the formulated meanings for similarity and then grouped them into clustered themes. Subsequently, closely allied cluster themes were congregated into a global theme. These themes were examined and revised by a colleague and a university instructor who both specialize in language. The researcher together with the evaluators made sure that each formulated meaning fell to only one and unique cluster theme which had a distinguished meaning from other structures (Mason, 2002). Likewise, cluster themes belonged to unique global theme. Table 3 shows samples of cluster themes with global theme.

Table 3. Cluster Themes and Global Theme Sample

Formulated Meanings	Cluster Themes	Global Theme
Student shares knowledge as their way of making sure that everybody in the	Group achievement	No-one-gets-left-behind mantra (community)

class passed the subjects.		spirit)
Even without contribution, a student is made part of the project to make sure all get a passing grade.		
Student shares knowledge as their way of making sure that no one gets knocked out from the program.		
Student feels sorry when someone gets knocked out	Empathy for drop outs	

of the program.		
Student misses the company of those who were dropped from the program.		
Emotional pain strikes when someone failed the subject.		

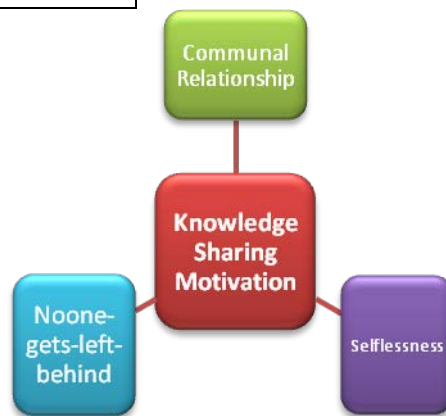


Figure 1: Final Thematic Map

Step 5. An exhaustive description was framed anchored on the themes being articulated. In order to ensure that this description bears all of the themes, the researcher sought the expertise of a colleague, university instructor, and a research coordinator from the Division Office. The final description underwent revisions as a result.

Sense of fulfilment		
Group achievement	No-one-gets-left-behind mantra	
Empathy for drop outs		

Table 4. Exhaustive Description

Cluster Themes	Global Themes	Exhaustive Description
Interpersonal Relationship	Communal relationship	Perceived driving force to share knowledge
Reward		
Debt of Goodwill		
No expectations	Selflessness	

Step 6. A re-examination of the overall structure was administered to get rid of the redundant, inappropriate, and excessive terms and meanings. This was done so that the overall structure stayed true to the phenomenon as experienced by the students.

Step 7. Each of the ten informants was given a printed copy of the result including the transcript, significant statements, formulated meanings, themes, and the exhaustive description for him/her to evaluate as to its authenticity and reliability. S/he was given enough time and encouraged to feel free to pose any clarifications or give corrections in case their words were put out

of context. Eventually, all of them expressed satisfaction and offered their nod as to the credibility of the results.

Trustworthiness of Study Results

This study strictly followed exhaustive approaches of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability to achieve trustworthiness of results which add rigor and strength to data gathering, analysis, and description (Speziale & Carpenter, 2007). Specifically, “member checking” (Creswell, 2014) was done by building an agreement between the researcher and the informants regarding the meanings and subsequent themes being formulated. A number of colleagues scrutinized the translation of the responses from Nenorte-Samarnon into English as well as the meanings and themes being drawn out. Further, revisions were made based on the suggestions and recommendations articulated by a university instructor who specializes in language. Equally important to note, the Division Research Coordinator examined the results in every step of the process.

III. RESULTS

In order to arrive at a balanced view of the results, both the Western models and Filipino Worldview models were employed (Montemayor, 2015).

Communal relationship

Interpersonal relationships. Sharing knowledge sometimes depend on the degree of relationship one has with the knowledge receiver. Ipe (2003) articulated that a person screens who to share knowledge with while Majid and Yeung (2007) asserted that knowledge sharing depends on the depth of student relationships with peers. Thus, lack of depth in peer-relationship stave off knowledge sharing among students (Jer Yuen, Yuen, & Shaheen Majid, 2007). This relates to “pakikipagkapwa” which necessitates certain degree of close social relationship (Jocano, 2001). Hence, more efforts were being exerted when the one who solicits the knowledge is a close friend while reluctance kicks in if not. Two informants expounded on this:

“Occasionally, I only select who to teach. And most preferably close friends.”

“Even if it’s already night time, I really go to her house just to give assistance about our assignment or sometimes project.”

Reward. External motivation requires parties involved to get into a give-and-take relationship (Ipe, 2003). Since most of STE students come from very poor families, going to school is an struggle for them as studying really entails money no matter how free public education is. They come from big families where even food is scarce. In order to satisfy their hunger, they tutor their classmates for food. This reflects the Filipino value of “pakikipagkapwa” which means shared identity and being-with-others (Gripaldo, 2005). Reward can be a product of reciprocity (Ipe, 2003) which among Filipinos, is driven by “pakikipagkapuwa” (Jocano, 2001). This concurs with Bartol and Srivastava (2002) who articulated that knowledge sharing and rewards are associated. One informant’s statement exhibits this:

“Some of us share their knowledge in exchange of snacks.”

Debt of Goodwill. On another note, students share knowledge as a way to give back the favors they receive. Filipino as they are, they follow the value of debt of goodwill which de Castro (2001) argued is a more viable translation of “utang na loob” because it implies that the recipient of the favour puts a premium on good will. He expounded that there must be willingness on the part of the beneficiary to be ready to repay when opportunity calls for it. Students have imbibed this Filipino value which is very evident in their knowledge sharing behavior. A remarkable statement was:

“Before, someone lent me her ballpen. One time, she asked, “How do I answer this?” Of course, I taught her because of what she did in the past.”

Selflessness

Giving without expectation. There are students who share knowledge just for the sake of helping and nothing more; no expectations nor something in return. An act of philanthropy, “kawanggawa” is a deeply entrenched Filipino tradition (Virola, Ilarina, Reyes, & Buenaventura, 2010). This is the Filipino version of altruism, the behavior with the ultimate goal of addressing another’s welfare (Engels, 1983).

“I teach them because I wanted to help, that’s all.”

Sense of fulfilment. Students gain certain amount of happiness when their classmates learn from them. People feel satisfied after doing good for others (Luks & Payne, 2001) and these satisfaction leads to a desire to help even more (Baumeister, Bushman, & Whitford, 2010). They also feel they are useful which reflects the findings of Wymer & Self (2014) that volunteers’ need to be useful was one of their intrinsic rewards.

“The important thing is I’m able to share my knowledge. When s/he learns, I feel great that I’m able to help.”

“Not only do I feel a sense of satisfaction when they learn from me. It also helps boost my self-confidence.”

“Though I am this kind of person, I can still extend help to people.”

No-one-gets-left-behind mantra

Group achievement. The informants raised the prominence of knowledge sharing as their way of making sure that everybody in the class obtained a passing grade so that all of them get promoted. Jocano (2001) explained that this sense of “community” or collectiveness among Filipinos puts emphasis on shared identity and shared goal among the members of that “community.” A popular Filipino value, working together (community spirit) or damayan (tulongan) is aimed to lighten someone’s load (Veneracion, 1996). It is also an expression of care and to share with others (Sizoo, 2010). Solidarity, Teng and Song (2011) found out, was significantly associated with sharing behaviors. This is reflected in noteworthy statements:

“I teach...so that the whole section doesn’t get dismantled or none of us gets transferred to regular class.”

“Even when someone did not help in writing the script because of family problem, we still included her so that she also obtain a passing grade.”

Empathy for dropouts. Students miss the company of those who were dropped from the program. Emotional pain strikes when someone failed the subject. Hence, they share the feelings and emotions (Foundation, 2007) of their classmates who receive failing grades thus risk of being dropped from the program. As a reaction, they teach them to improve their academic performance. In Filipino context, this relates to the value of “awa,” which goes beyond pity or sympathy or understanding. Filipinos usually share the misfortunes and sorrows of others (Jocano, 2001). This popular Filipino value is what makes students identify with and understand the feelings of being eliminated.

“It breaks my heart when someone gets knocked out of the program.”

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Understanding knowledge sharing motivation of students could be very instrumental in teachers’ decision to make adjustments in the group learning activities to effect an increase in the number of STE students who were promoted to the next grade level. The whole process further reflected the efficiency of Colaizzi’s framework (1978) in constructing in-depth meaning from human experiences. It is recommended that researches be conducted on developing a richer understanding of how Filipino values form knowledge sharing behavior of students.

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AUTHORS

First Author – Michael Jarito Froilan, The gentleman from Laoang, Northern Samar is a teaching staff member at Laoang National High School in the Division of Northern Samar, Department of Education. With 13 years (6 years as Local Government-Paid Teacher and 7 years under DepEd) of teaching experience, he has been handling Mathematics, Research, Statistics, and Information, Communication, and Technology subjects. A graduate of Master of Arts in Education major in Supervision and Administration, he pursued and completed the academic requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy major in Educational Management at the University of Eastern Philippines, Catarman. His researches covered bullying, attitude

towards family planning, knowledge sharing, and program evaluation.

Correspondence Author – Michael Jarito Froilan,
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5159-7148>,
michael.froilan@deped.gov.ph 09208103365