



PAK Publishing Group
Growing Knowledge for Future

Proceedings Book of ICEFMO, 2013, Malaysia
Handbook on the Economic, Finance and Management Outlooks
ISBN: 978-969-9347-14-6

Moderating Effects of Personal Characteristics on Intention to be Involved in KM Process

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Abstract

This study investigates the contributing factors of intention to be involved in KM process as well as the moderating effects of personal characteristics on intention to be involved in KM process. As the scope of the KM is very wide, this study was confined only to the knowledge creation and sharing processes of KM. Data were collected from 313 executives of seven companies in the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry using self-administered questionnaires. There were four significant predictors of intention to be involved in KM process; two KM enablers and two individual acceptance factors; namely 'trust & collaboration', 'ICT use and support for search and sharing', 'performance expectancy of KM', and 'effort expectancy of KM'. Furthermore, the study found that gender moderates the relationship between 'ICT use and support for search and sharing', 'performance expectancy of KM' and intention to be involved in KM process. The findings suggest that if the policy makers in the industry are planning to implement KM initiatives, they should consider gender differences of the executive and the strategies should be formulated accordingly.

Key words: Knowledge Management (KM), KM Enablers, Moderating effects, KM Readiness

1. Introduction

Knowledge management (KM) has become an important trend in the business practices (Nonaka, 1994) today. However, the KM processes implementation stress on changes in the organization and its members' attitude (Holt, Bartczak, Clark, & Trent, 2007). Therefore, an

evaluation of organizational readiness for KM process implementation is recommended before embarking on actual implementation (Holt et al., 2007; Siemieniuch & Sinclair, 2004). To date only a limited number of empirical research works were published in this regard. To name a few, (Holt et al., 2007) and (Shirazi & Mortazavi, 2011) have conducted surveys, which takes into account the implementation of KM as a change management process. Meanwhile, the work of (Taylor & Schellenberg, 2005) measures the gaps between the importance and the effectiveness of KM related organizational practices. Similarly, (Wei, Choy, & Yew, 2009) have identified several dimensions of KM success factors, KM strategies, and KM process and assessed the organizational readiness for KM through the level of actual implementation of the above mentioned factors.

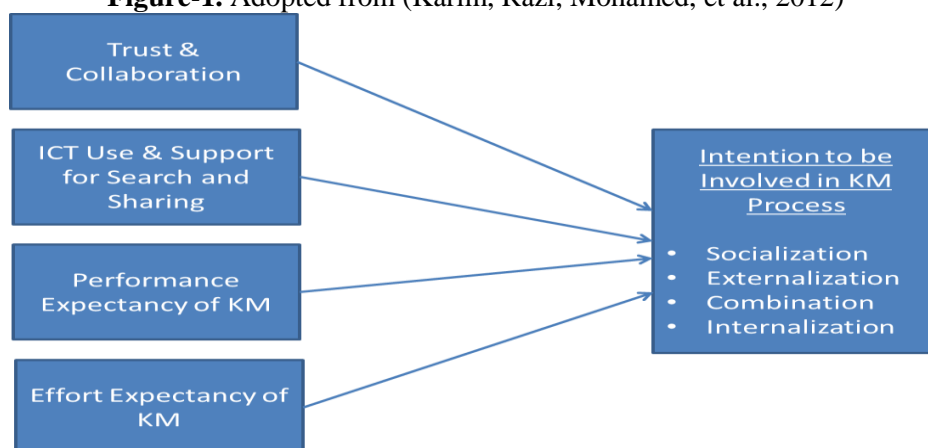
However, none of the above mentioned studies considered the readiness dimension from the organizational members' perspective for KM process implementation. Nevertheless, (Karim, Razi, & Mohamed, 2012; Karim, Razi, Mohamed, & Abdullah, 2012), have emphasized the importance of assessing the readiness for KM from organizational members' perspective and defined KM readiness as employees' collective intention to be involved in KM process. Accordingly (Karim, Razi, & Mohamed, 2012) have found that the SECI (socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization) process introduced by (Nonaka, Byosiene, Borucki, & Konno, 1994), which is collectively known as knowledge creation theory, as a significant and reliable measures to assess the organizational members' intention to be involved in KM process. Similarly, (Karim, Razi, Mohamed, et al., 2012) have verified that trust & collaboration, ICT use and support for search and sharing, performance expectancy of KM, and effort expectancy of KM as the contributing factors of intention to be involved in KM. The present work is considered as an extension to the works of (Karim, Razi, & Mohamed, 2012) and (Karim, Razi, Mohamed, et al., 2012). The main objective of the current work is to investigate whether personal characteristics such as gender, age, experience, and management level of the organizational members moderate the relationship between the intention to be involved in KM and the contributing factors.

2. Background

Organizational readiness for KM is perceived when the employees collectively give high level of intention in getting involved with the SECI process (Karim, Razi, & Mohamed, 2012). SECI process means four different modes of knowledge conversion: tacit knowledge to tacit knowledge (socialization), explicit knowledge to explicit knowledge (combination), tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge (externalization), and explicit knowledge to tacit knowledge (internalization) (Nonaka, 1994). (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2001) explain that SECI process describe the ways in which knowledge is shared through the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge. (Karim, Razi, & Mohamed, 2012) have empirically proved that the SECI is a significant and reliable measure to assess the organizational members' intention to be involved in KM process.

Intensive review of KM literature reveals that there are several organizational factors that should be considered as pre-conditional factors for successful KM implementation. (Lee & Choi, 2003) termed it as KM enablers. Similarly, there are many theories in the information systems (IS) literature, such as theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), diffusion of innovation (DOI) (Rogers, 1995), theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), technology acceptance model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) and so on, which stress on the importance of individual acceptance of any organizational change, such as, initiation for KM process implementation. Accordingly (Karim, Razi, Mohamed, et al., 2012), as shown in figure 1, have found that there are four significant contributing factors of intention to be involved in KM process; two KM enablers and two individual acceptance factors; namely 'trust & collaboration', 'ICT use and support for search and sharing', 'performance expectancy of KM', and 'effort expectancy of KM'.

Figure-1. Adopted from (Karim, Razi, Mohamed, et al., 2012)



3. Hypotheses

A number of moderating factors which influence on the relationship between behavioral intention and its antecedence have been documented in the literature, especially in the information systems literature,. For instance, (Venkatesh et al., 2003) have considered gender, age, experience, and voluntariness of use as moderators in the UTAUT model on behavioral intention. Similarly, (Sun & Zhang, 2006) have classified the moderating factors as organizational factors, technological factors and individual factors. The individual factors consist of gender, age, and experience. User types and usage types have been used in the study of (King & He, 2006) as moderating variable. In addition, (Schepers & Wetzels, 2007) have taken the type of respondents as one of the moderating factors to their study. In addition, (AbuShanab & Pearson, 2007) and (Al-Gahtani, Hubona, & Wang, 2007) have considered gender, age, and experience as moderating variables. Considering the relevancy of these individual characteristics, the factors of gender, age, experience, and management level have been considered in this study as the moderating variables on the relationship between intention to be involved in KM process and the contributing factors. Hence, the following hypotheses were advanced.

H1: The relationship between ‘trust & collaboration’ and the intention to be involved in KM process will be moderated by personal characteristics (gender, age, experience, and management level).

H2: The relationship between ‘ICT use and support for searching and sharing’ and the intention to be involved in KM process will be moderated by personal characteristics (gender, age, experience, and management level).

H3: The relationship between performance expectancy of KM and the intention to be involved in KM process will be moderated by personal characteristics (gender, age, experience, and management level).

H4: The relationship between effort expectancy of KM and the intention to be involved in KM process will be moderated by personal characteristics (gender, age, experience, and management level).

4. Methodology

Self-administered survey method was used to conduct this research and data were collected from 313 executives of seven companies in the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry. This industry was selected because it is considered as one of the most knowledge intensive industries (Wei et al., 2009) in Sri Lanka. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16.0 was used for data analysis. Table 1 depicts the profile of respondents. The results of factor analysis, reliability test, descriptive analysis, and relationship analysis (stepwise multiple regression analysis) were already reported in (Karim, Razi, Mohamed, et al., 2012).

Table-1. Profile of the Respondents

Characteristics	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	229	73.2%
	Female	80	25.6%
Age	Below 30 years	155	49.5%
	31-35 years	73	23.3%
	36-50 years	79	25.2%
Experience	Below 5 years	110	35.1%
	6-10 years	121	38.73%
	11 & Above years	77	24.6%
Organisational Position	Operational level	174	55.6%
	Tactical level	83	26.5%
	Strategic level	47	15.0%

The moderation effect analysis was carried out using SPSS hierarchical multiple regression following (Coakes, Steed, & Price, 2008). The hierarchical multiple regressions has been advocated as more appropriate method for determining whether a quantitative variable has a moderating effect on the relationship between two other quantitative variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Cramer & ebrary, 2003). In this method, the orders in which independent variables are entered into the regression equation were known, and were based on logical or theoretical considerations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001; Yiing & Ahmad, 2009).

The following steps were followed for moderation analysis;

1. Correlation analysis was performed based on different level of moderating factors (gender, age, experience, and positions) as a preliminary analysis, which as suggested by (Warner, 2008) would examine any difference in correlation between different level of the moderating variables and the dependent variable.

2. In order to perform the hierarchical multiple regression, the categorical moderating variables were coded using dummy coding technique, which in turn, makes it is easy to implement, and makes the interpretation of the results relatively straightforward (Aguinis, 2004). Accordingly, the gender was coded as “Male = 0, Female = 1”. The other moderating variables; age, experience, and positions, those have three levels, were coded as indicated below:

	D1	D2
<u>Age</u>		
Below 30 Years	1	0
31-35 Years	0	1
36-50 Years	0	0
<u>Experience</u>		
Below 5 Years	1	0
6-10 Years	0	1
11 and Above	0	0
<u>Position</u>		
Operational Level	1	0
Tactical level	0	1
Strategic Level	0	0

3. As recommended by (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003), a two-step hierarchical multiple regressions analysis was performed to examine the moderating effect of each moderating variable on the relationship between each independent and dependent variable. In the first step, the main effects represented by independent and moderator variables were entered. In the second step, the moderation effects (Baron & Kenny, 1986), also known as interaction variables were computed as products of independent and moderator variables were entered in the equation. Moderation effects were determined based on following criteria;

- A moderating variable (X2) is a moderator of an independent (X1), dependent variable (Y) relationship if there is an interaction between the independent variable (X1) and the moderating variable (X2) as predictors of the dependent variable (Y) (Warner, 2008)
- A significant increment of R² (Cohen et al., 2003) in Step 2, indicates the presence of moderation effects (Aguinis, 2004).
- A moderating effect is detected when the regression coefficient of the interaction term is significant. The F-value in Step 2, illustrates the significance of the regression model, which, in turn, represents the moderation effects.

4. Then, the results are interpreted by representing the regression equations graphically in order to explain the way of moderating effect is established.

5. Findings

Hypothesis (H1)

The overall correlation between ‘Trust & Collaboration’ and ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’ was .483**. Similarly the correlations based on different levels of all moderators (gender, age, experience, and organizational positions) also showed a modest correlation (from .435** to .612**) between these two variables. Hence, the results might be an indication of no moderation effect of personal characteristics on the relationship between ‘Trust & Collaboration’ and ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’. To verify the above indication, a two-step hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed among these variables. The results of the hierarchical multiple regressions confirmed that personal characteristics have no any moderation effect on the relationship between these two variables as there is no significant increment of R² (ΔR^2) after adding the interaction terms of any moderating variable to the regressions models.

Hypothesis (H2)

The overall correlation between ‘ICT Use & Support for Searching and Sharing’ and ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’ is .416. However, the correlations, as shown in Table 1, based on different levels of moderators’ shows a mixed level of positive correlation between these two variables that designate a possible moderation effect.

Table-1. Summary of Correlation Analysis between ‘ICT Use & Support for searching and Sharing’ and ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’

	Intention to be involved in KM Process
ICT Use & Support for searching and Sharing	.416**
Gender	
Male (229; 73.2%)	
Female (80; 25.6%)	.370**
Age	.545**
Below 30 Years (155; 49.5%)	
31-35 Years (73; 23.3%)	.361**
36-50 Years (79; 25.2%)	.501**
Experience	.441**
Below 5 Years (110; 35.1%)	
6-10 Years (121; 38.7%)	.325**
11 & Above (77; 24.6%)	.454**
Organizational Position	.429**
Operational Level (174; 55.6%)	
Tactical Level (83; 26.5%)	.438**
Strategic Level (47; 15.0%)	.391**
	.413**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

To verify the above possible moderation effect, a two-step hierarchical multiple regressions analysis was performed among these variables and the summary of the results are shown in Table 2.

Table-2. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis (H2)

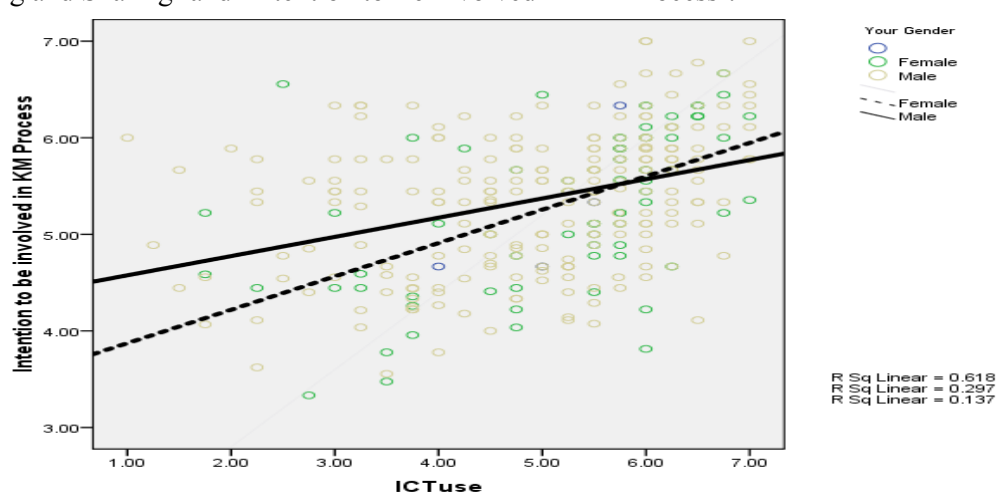
Intention to be involved in KM Process							Change Statistics	
Model 1			Model 2					
Source	b	SE	t	b	SE	t	ΔR^2	Sig. F
Int. effect of Gender								
R ²			.174				.187	.013 .031
(Constant)	4.199	.151	27.741**	4.377	.171	25.548**		
ICT Use	.235	.029	8.031**	.199	.033	5.951**		
Gender	-.088	.087	-1.018	-.849	.361	-2.349*		
ICT Use X Gender				.147	.068	2.168*		
Int. effect of Age								
R ²			.175				.181	.006 .306
(Constant)	4.212	.164	25.725**	4.298	.279	15.385**		
ICT Use	.233	.029	7.960**	.216	.054	3.984**		
AgeD1	.043	.108	.396	-.457	.422	-1.082		
AgeD2	-.065	.092	-.703	-.006	.356	-.016		
ICT Use X AgeD1				.100	.082	1.222		
ICT Use X AgeD2				-.011	.069	-.163		
Int. effect of Experience								
R ²			.188				.190	.002 .680
(Constant)	4.239	.158	26.779**	4.220	.275	15.323**		
ICT Use	.224	.029	7.694**	.228	.055	4.119**		
ExpD1	.103	.097	1.058	-.010	.370	-.027		
ExpD2	-.130	.098	-1.320	.067	.383	.174		
ICT Use X ExpD1				.021	.072	.294		
ICT Use X ExpD2				-.039	.076	-.520		
Int. effect of Positions								
R ²			.002				.680	.178 .180
(Constant)	4.140	.176	23.581**	4.181	.368	11.369**		
ICT Use	.235	.029	8.032**	.227	.071	3.197*		
PosD1	.076	.122	.623	.218	.463	.469		
PosD2	.029	.109	.261	-.124	.423	-.294		
ICT Use X PosD1				-.028	.090	-.318		
ICT Use X PosD2				.030	.081	.372		

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .001

As shown in Table 2, model 2 of the interaction effect of gender shows the results after the interaction term of gender has been entered. The addition of the interaction term resulted in an R^2 change of .013, $F(1, 305) = 4.698$, $p < .05$. This report supports the presence of a moderating effect. In other words, the moderating effect of gender explains 1.3% of variance in 'Intention to Be Involved in KM Process' above and beyond the variance explained by 'ICT Use & Support for Searching and Sharing' and gender.

There is a .147 difference between the slope of 'Intention to Be Involved in KM Process' on 'ICT Use & Support for Searching and Sharing' between the female (coded as 1) and the male (coded as 0). As shown in figure 2, the slope regressing 'Intention to Be Involved in KM Process' on 'ICT Use & Support for Searching and Sharing' is steeper for female as compared to male. In other words, the relationship is stronger for females as compared to male group. That means, making female executives to use ICT more/less will increase/decrease the intention of them to be involved in KM more than their male counterparts.

Figure-2. Moderation Effect of Gender on the Relationship between 'ICT Use & Support for Searching and Sharing' and 'Intention to Be Involved in KM Process'.



This suggests that extensive use of ICT and support for searching and sharing probably induce female executives more than the male executives to be involved in KM process in the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry. Similar to the factors, such as different orientation between male and female (Eagly, 1987), that contributed for female executive to be more sensitive to the IT support, females' appreciation for resources and supports (Hu, Al-Gahtani, & Hu, 2010), and females' willingness to comply with the manifest of the organization than male (Hu et al., 2010) might have influenced ICT use and support for search and sharing as well.

Other than the moderation effects of gender, there is no evidence for any more moderation effect on the relationship between 'ICT Use & Support for Searching and Sharing' and 'Intention to Be Involved in KM Process' as the change in R^2 (ΔR^2) is not significant after adding the interaction of age, experience and organizational position to the regression model.

Hypothesis (H3)

The overall correlation between 'Performance Expectancy of KM' and 'Intention to Be Involved in KM Process' is .497**. However, the correlations, as shown in Table 3, based on different levels of moderators' shows a mixed level of positive correlation between these two variables that can be an indication of a possible moderation effect.

Table-3. Summary of Correlation Analysis between ‘Performance Expectancy of KM’ and ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’

	Intention to be involved in KM Process
Performance Expectancy of KM	.497**
Gender	
Male (229; 73.2%)	.434**
Female (80; 25.6%)	.659**
Age	
Below 30 Years (155; 49.5%)	.461**
31-35 Years (73; 23.3%)	.592**
36-50 Years (79; 25.2%)	.495**
Experience	
Below 5 Years (110; 35.1%)	.392**
6-10 Years (121; 38.7%)	.602**
11 & Above (77; 24.6%)	.507**
Organizational Position	
Operational Level (174; 55.6%)	.483**
Tactical Level (83; 26.5%)	.462**
Strategic Level (47; 15.0%)	.704**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

To verify it, a two-step hierarchical multiple regressions analysis was performed among these variables and the summary of the results are shown in Table 4. As shown in table 4, model 2 of the interaction effect of gender shows the results after the interaction term of gender has been entered. The addition of the interaction term resulted in an R² change of .017, F (1, 305) = 6.963, p < .01. This report supports the presence of a moderating effect. In other words, the moderating effect of gender explains 1.7% of variance in ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’ above and beyond the variance explained by ‘Performance Expectancy of KM’ and gender. There is a .201 difference between the slope of ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’ on ‘Performance Expectancy of KM’ between the female (coded as 1) and the male (coded as 0). As shown in figure 3, the slope regressing ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’ on ‘Performance Expectancy of KM’ is steeper for female as compared to male. In other words, the relationship is stronger for females as compared to male group. That means, increase/decrease in the performance expectancy of KM of the female executives will increase/decrease the intention of them to be involved in KM more than their male counterparts.

Table-4. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis (H6d)

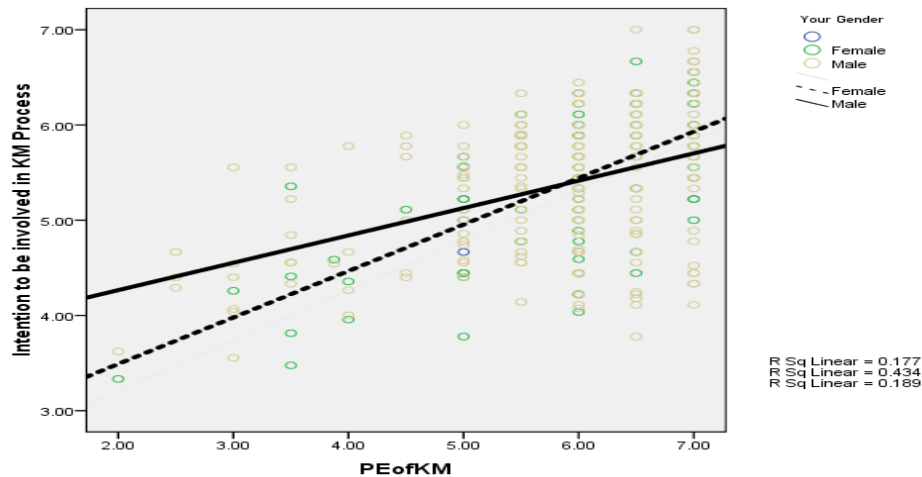
Intention to be involved in KM Process							Change Statistics	
Source	Model 1			Model 2			ΔR^2	Sig. F
	b	SE	t	b	SE	t		
Int. effect of Gender								
R ²				.248			.265	.009
(Constant)	3.383	.201	16.792**	3.692	.231	15.965**		
PE of KM	.340	.034	10.044**	.287	.039	7.346**		
Gender	-.010	.082	-.127	1.177	.450	-2.618*		
PE of KM X Gender				.201	.076	2.639*		
Int. effect of Age								
R ²				.260			.261	.825
(Constant)	3.328	.211	15.765**	3.449	.415	8.315**		

PE of KM	.348	.034	10.272**	.327	.070	4.702**
AgeD1	.139	.103	1.352	-.147	.536	-.275
AgeD2	-.040	.087	-.458	-.094	.517	-.182
PE of KM X AgeD1				.050	.091	.548
PE of KM X AgeD2				.009	.087	.107
Int. effect of Experience						
R ²			.278		.285	.007 .231
(Constant)	3.388	.201	16.843**	3.510	.355	9.900**
PE of KM	.340	.033	10.219**	.319	.061	5.184**
ExpD1	.128	.091	1.404	-.397	.476	-.834
ExpD2	-.149	.093	-1.611	.102	.498	.204
PE of KM X ExpD1				.090	.081	1.108
PE of KM X ExpD2				-.042	.085	-.494
Int. effect of Positions						
R ²			.267		.272	.005 .354
(Constant)	3.337	.210	15.858**	2.842	.438	6.492**
PE of KM	.356	.034	10.441**	.445	.077	5.780**
PosD1	.025	.115	.215	.841	.580	1.450
PosD2	-.085	.104	-.817	.436	.519	.840
PE of KM X PosD1				-.145	.101	-1.437
PE of KM X PosD2				-.094	.090	-1.040

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .001

This suggests that usefulness of KM probably induce female executives more than the male executives in the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry when shaping their attitudes toward KM. This different can be attributed to gender differences, a fundamental socio-cultural factor, that can influence people's perceptions and behaviors significantly (Gefen & Straub, 1997). According to (Hu et al., 2010), gender plays an important role in determining a person's frame of reference in evaluating a technology; e.g. usefulness or ease of use. However, some empirical evidence suggests the perceived usefulness as more salient for men than for women (Venkatesh & Morris, 2000), a phenomenon which needs further investigations. Nevertheless, the determination of final behavioral intention does not differ on the gender basis. It implies that the female and male executives similarly rely on the perceived usefulness of KM to make their intention to be involved in KM process.

Figure-3. Moderation Effect of Gender on the Relationship between ‘Performance Expectancy of KM’ and ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’.



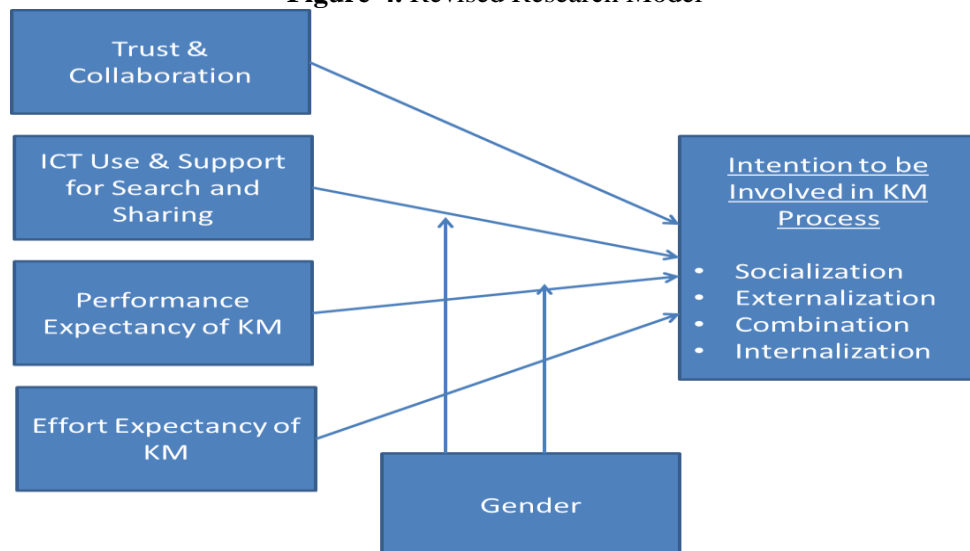
Other than the moderation effects of gender, there is no evidence for any more moderation effect on the relationship between ‘Performance Expectancy of KM’ and ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’ as the change in R^2 (ΔR^2) is not significant after adding the interaction terms of age, experience and organizational position to the regression model.

Hypothesis (H4)

The overall correlation between ‘Effort Expectancy of KM’ and ‘Intention to Be Involved in KM Process’ is .495**. Similarly the correlations based on different levels of all moderators also show a modest correlation (from .398** to .588**) between these two variables, which suggest that the personal characteristics have no any moderation effect on the relationship between these two variables. To verify the above indication, a two-step hierarchical multiple regressions analysis was performed among these variables that confirmed it as there is no significant increment of R^2 (ΔR^2) after adding the interaction terms of any moderating variable to the regressions models.

Based on the moderation analysis the research model can be revised as shown in figure 4.

Figure-4. Revised Research Model



6. Conclusion

The findings of moderation analysis show that gender is the main moderator of KM readiness of the Sri Lankan Telecommunication Industry. Therefore, these findings suggest that if the policy makers in the industry are planning to implement KM process, they should consider gender

differences when making strategic decisions especially regarding IT related factors and when making relevancy of KM process with job performances. The managers should give more consideration to provide more IT facilities if the workforce at executive level comprises more female than male. Similarly, the potential improvement of the job performance as a result of involving in KM process also should be made explicit to get the maximum from the female executive towards KM process.

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