

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF
KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN SMES CROSS-FUNCTIONAL TEAM**



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FULLFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR
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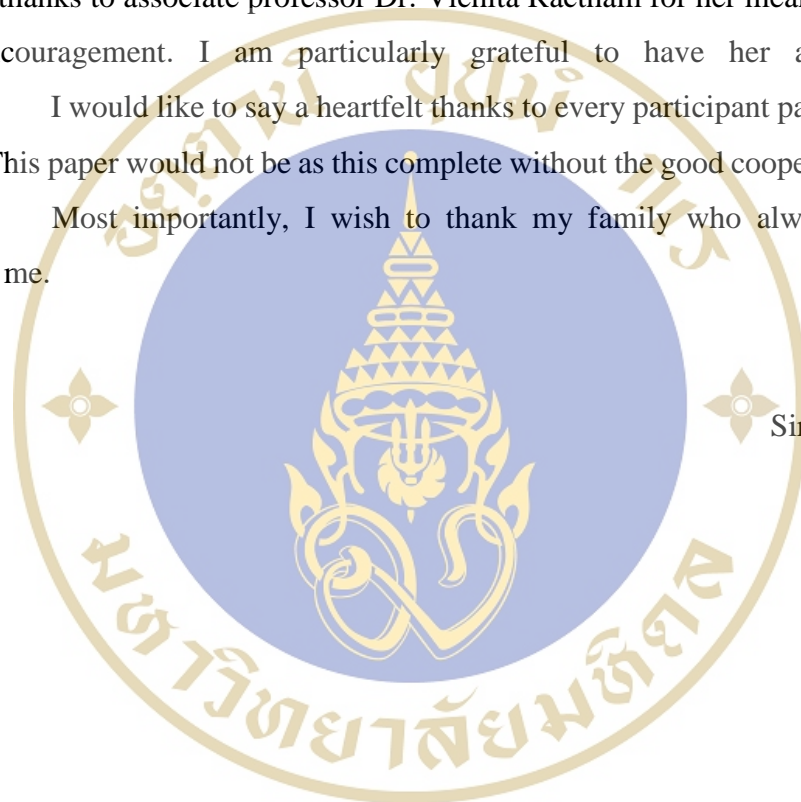
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ABSTRACT

In today's business environment, SMEs who hold the largest portion of Thailand market must be adaptable and differentiate themselves to keep ahead of the competition. Several studies elucidated that organizations that have adopted the cross-functional team as one of their operational strategies can improve their competitive edge through the utilizing of variety knowledge from different working members. Therefore, this study is interesting in study the motivational factors influencing knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team.

KEYWORDS: SMEs/Cross-functional team/Knowledge Sharing

43 Pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In Thailand, SMEs comprise the largest portion of the market at around 99.8% and their level of competitiveness are now impacted by the growing level of competition especially in Bangkok area. (OSMEP, 2018) Therefore, SMEs are needed to be adaptable and differentiate their operational strategy in order to improve their competitiveness. (Njuguna, et.al, 2015)

Önday (2016) mentioned that the development of cross-level and multi-level relationship in organization are likely to be effective in further development of organization. One of the working practices related to his study is the adoption of 'cross-functional team'. Wiesner, et.al. (2004) showed that the functional flexibility of cross-functional working team can improve organizational performances by creating positive impacts on product/service, restructuring outcomes, the new ownership of organization, the change in management personnel, and the changes to structure of workforce. Also, cross-functional team help organization to improve its problem solving, job enrichment, and self-managing team. Similar to Pylväs (2012), the cross-functional team is proved to enhance SMEs outcomes by enhancing the efficiency of knowledge management among team members through knowledge sharing process from one's understanding to other team members. Besides, it is required less organizational renovation and resources in order to set up this working team. Consequently, numerous SMEs have adopted the cross-functional team to improve organization competitiveness through knowledge utilizing resulted in knowledge sharing process.

For organization in the 21st century, knowledge is recognized as an important strategic resource of the organization. (Tocan, 2012) Consequently, knowledge sharing process help organization to retain knowledge within the organization and create the new knowledge by conversing individual knowledge into

organizational knowledge. (Pangil & Narsurddin, 2013) Therefore, it is important to for SMEs cross-functional teams to set up and manage their knowledge sharing process.

1.2 Objectives of the study

Nowadays, several changes in Thai SMEs context in this digital era have been noticed. For example, the transition of the business model into e-Commerce business model, or others aligned with technology and innovation advancements such as Platform as a Service (PaaS), Software as a Service (SaaS), Info Products, or Dropshipping business model. Meanwhile, these SMEs also adopted the new working team structure which is the cross-functional team due to their different working constraints and visions.

By definition, the term 'cross-functional team' or 'cross-functional project team' is referred to a working team that comprised of members from different knowledge field, experiences, functional, and working areas. (Ancona & Caldwell, 1990; Kettley & Hirsh, 2000; Patil, 2003; O'Connor & Wulf, 2004; and Pylväs, 2012) The Knowledge Sharing processes of the cross-functional team are set by multi-level-influencing factors from an individual level, team level, to an organizational level or national level in practical since organizational knowledge has to be transferred by motivating forces and collaborative ways where organization members can create and connect to their knowledge base. (Kim, 2007; Oye, et.al, 2011; Pencil & Nasurddin, 2013; Chouikha & Dakhli (2012); Zheng, 2017)

The objectives of the study are to study on motivational factors influencing outcomes of knowledge sharing of SMEs cross-functional team. The expected results are to identify what would influence working team members to share working knowledge among each other and what are the keys to further sustain their competitive through the knowledge sharing processes as well. The structure of this study is comprised of five chapters. The first chapter provides background and objectives of the study on knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team. The second chapter provides detailed review on related studies on SMEs in Thailand, interdependent relationship between knowledge sharing and cross-functional team, and motivational factors influenced knowledge sharing in the organization. The third chapter shows the

development of research methodology and data collection methods of the study. The fourth chapter are findings and data analysis from the study including finding discussion. The last chapter shows conclusions from the study and recommendations for SMEs to improve their knowledge sharing efficiency in a cross-functional team.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins with the definitions of SMEs in Thailand market and its importance to the Thai economy. This part provides the big picture of Small and Medium Enterprises in Thailand including the density of SMEs in Thailand and what are required in order to be competitive in the market. The following parts of this chapter are reviews on improving cross-functional team performance, motivational factors influenced knowledge sharing in the organization, and the conclusion table together with the conceptual framework of the study.

2.1 Definition of SMEs in Thailand and its importance the Thai economy

In Thailand, Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) were classified by the number of fixed assets and number of employees as shown in the table below. (Table 2.1)

Table 2.1 The classification of SMEs in Thailand

Sector	Small Enterprise	Medium Enterprise
Trade Sector (Retailing)	An enterprise with fixed assets up to 30 million baht and/or have employees of up to 15 persons	An enterprise with fixed assets of between 30 to 60 million baht and/or have employees of between 16-150 persons
Trade Sector (Wholesale)	An enterprise with fixed assets up to 50 million baht and/or have employees of up to 25 persons	An enterprise with fixed assets of between 50 to 100 million baht and/or have employees of between 26-200 persons

Table 2.1 The classification of SMEs in Thailand (cont.)

Sector	Small Enterprise	Medium Enterprise
Manufacturing Sector	An enterprise with fixed assets up to 50 million baht and/or have employees of up to 50 persons	An enterprise with fixed assets of between 50 to 200 million baht and/or have employees of between 51-200 persons
Service Sector	An enterprise with fixed assets up to 50 million baht and/or have employees of upto 50 persons	An enterprise with fixed assets of between 50 to 200 million baht and/or have employees of between 51-200 persons

Source: Royal Thai Government Gazette, Volume 119 (20 September 2002)

Currently, the percentage of SMEs is now covering the majority of all enterprise in Thailand with more than 99% of the Thai market. (Table 2.2)

Table 2.2 The proportion of enterprises in Thai market classified by size from 2015-2017

Type/Year	2015*	Proportion	2016*	Proportion	2017*	Proportion
Small Enterprise (SE)	2,753,038	99.26%	2,989,378	99.19%	3,028,495	99.18%
Medium Enterprise (ME)	12,928	0.47%	15,301	0.51%	18,298	0.60%

Table 2.2 The proportion of enterprises in Thai market classified by size from 2015-2017 (cont.)

Type/Year	2015*	Proportion	2016*	Proportion	2017*	Proportion
Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	2,765,966	99.72%	3,004,679	99.70%	3,046,793	99.78%
Large Enterprises (LE)	7,156	0.26%	9,025	0.30%	6,662	0.22%
Unclassified Enterprises (UE)	503	0.02%	18	0.00%	16	0.001%
Total	2,773,625	100.00%	3,013,722	100.00%	3,053,471	100.00%

Noted: * = unit of enterprises

Source: SMEs White Paper 2017 and 2018, OSMEP

While the statistic from the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board also indicated that SMEs play an important role in driving Thailand's Economy. This is because SMEs are the production base of intermediate goods in many supply chain especially, for the export goods. Also, SMEs play important role on job creation outside the agricultural sector in upcountry areas over the country. In 2017, SMEs made contributions to Thailand's GDP at around 6.5 Trillion Baht or approximately at 42.4% of total GDP (Table 2.3) where Services Sector, Trade & Repair, and Manufacturing were the top key players toward enriching SMEs' GDP at 40.9%, 29.9% and 22.9% respectively. (Table 2.4)

Table 2.3 The contribution to Thailand's GDP by type of enterprise

	SE	ME	SME	LE	Total
Value to GDP (Trillion Baht)	4.64	1.91	6.55	6.65	15.45
Percentage of GDP	30.0%	12.4%	42.40%	43%	100.00%
Growth Rate	5.6%	3.9%	5.10%	3.1%	3.90%

Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board compiled by OSMEP in SMEs White Paper, 2018

Table 2.4 The contribution of SMEs on GDP by economic sector

Percentage of GDP	SME GDP		National GDP	
	Contribution	Growth Rate	Contribution	Growth Rate
Private Services Sector (i.g. Real Estate, Hotels & Restaurants, and Transport & Communication Services)	40.90%	6.6%	40.4%	5.6%
Trade and Repairs (Wholesale & Retail category)	29.90%	6.3%	15.9%	6.3%

Table 2.4 The contribution of SMEs on GDP by economic sector (cont.)

Percentage of GDP	SME GDP		National GDP	
	Contribution	Growth Rate	Contribution	Growth Rate
Agriculture Sector	N/A	N/A	8.7%	6.2%
Other (Mining, Construction, Power Generation and Utilities)	6.30%	-2.5%	7.9%	-1.5%

Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board

Compiled by OSMEP in SMEs White Paper, 2018

In term of the density of SMEs in Thailand, the statistic from the Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP) showed that the highest density of these business sectors especially in Bangkok. (Table 2.5)

Table 2.5 Number of enterprises in Thailand by region in 2017

	SE	ME	SME	LE	N/A	Total
Bangkok	546,020	6,390	552,410	2,827	7	555,244
Bangkok (% of total)	18.55%	34.92%	18.65%	42.43%	46.67%	18.71%
North-eastern Region	719,089	1,776	720,865	600	2	721,467
Central Region (exclude Bangkok)	623,303	4,989	628,292	1,728	0	630,020

Table 2.5 Number of enterprises in Thailand by region in 2017 (cont.)

	SE	ME	SME	LE	N/A	Total
Northern Region	496,287	1,280	497,567	324	0	497,891
Southern Region	392,882	1,862	394,744	484	0	395,228
Eastern Region	165,481	2,001	167,482	699	1	168,182
N/A	4	0	4	0	5	9
Total	2,943,066	18,298	2,961,364	6,662	15	2,968,041

Source: The Office of SMEs Promotion (OSMEP), 2018

Therefore, in order to survive and maintain the competitive edge in the market, it is important for SMEs to be able to adapt into any market changes and be able to differentiate themselves for competitiveness. (Njuguna V. N., et.al, 2015) Ónday (2016) mentioned that the development of cross-level and multi-level relationship in organization are likely to be effective in further development by integrating the gap between micro and macro field of organization. While one of the practices related to this strategy is 'cross-functional team'. Wiesner, et.al. (2004) showed that cross-functional project teams, as one of the work change practices in organization, can create positive impacts on the major change in product/service, the major restructuring outcomes, the new ownership of organization, the change in management personnel, the changes to structure of workforce, and the major new plant, equipment and technology. This is because the adoption of cross-functional project team can improve functional flexibility of the working team that includes problem solving, job enrichment, and self-managing team. Like Pylväs (2012), the cross-functional team is proved to enhance SMEs out-comes by creating the availability of resource management, knowledge management, and creating organizational culture that accommodate the new ways of operation since the team comprise of working members from different field. Besides, it is required less organizational renovation and resources in order to set up a cross-functional team in the company.

2.2 Cross-functional team in SMEs context

Cross-functional Team or Cross-Functional Project Team refers to a working team that comprised of members from different knowledge background, experiences, and functional working areas. (Ancona & Caldwell, 1990; Kettley & Hirsh, 2000; Patil, 2003; O'Connor & Wulf, 2004; Pylväs, 2012)

According to the previous studies, cross-functional team can directly enhance the performance of SMEs through the internal process and external communication according to the different working filed and specialization of different members. (Ancona & Caldwell, 1990) This working form can help organizations create value for its products and services and also improve the bottom line of organization by closing the gap between compliances pol-icy and practical when there is information transfer across team members from different departments (O'Connor & Wulf, 2004) Other benefits of cross-functional team to organization are helping organization solving com-plex problems, maintaining clear customer focus and ensuring its long-term success when it is perceived as a tool for technology transfer and commercialization. (Patil, 2003) Moreover, cross-functional team adoption can create instant knowledge exchange whether it is a know-how or a problem-solving through their informally day-to-day working process (Kettley & Hirsh, 2000). Meanwhile, Pylväs (2012) showed the successful outcomes of the cross-functional team could be identified as a creation of information in term of innovation and expansion of one's perspective, an understanding expansion of team members about the project, leaning outcomes of members regarding their skills, and the outcomes under working limitations such as time and sense of effectiveness.

Oliveira, et.al. (2015) explained that the performances of cross-functional team are related with the outcomes of knowledge management in an organization. Their study proved that organizational climate, working incentives, working motivators, and management systems are influenced by the interdependent relationship between knowledge management and cross-functional team performance. Therefore, this study would like to study into the deeper level whether knowledge sharing as one of the components of knowledge management process has interdependent relationship with cross-functional team performance or not.

2.3 Motivational factors influencing knowledge sharing in the organization

Knowledge is a significant organizational resource and the most important strategic resource for every size of organizations in the 21st century. (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Tingting, 2017)

Under the processes of Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing is the collaborative ways that members in the organization create and connect to a shared knowledge of organization or their organizational knowledge. The organizational knowledge is the knowledge that created from its using purposes, for example, using for problem-solving, using for decision making, or using for judgment. On another perspective, knowledge can be viewed from action perspective as an object that can flow from one to other audiences and was created to state or represent the perspective of 'state of mind', 'an object', 'process', 'access to information', and 'capability'. (Wei, et.al, 2003) This knowledge is something that can be shared or transferred by the motivating force which could be intrinsic motivators or extrinsic motivators. (Oye, at.el, 2011) In other words, Organizational knowledge can be the elements of existing systems in the organization or 'Know-how', the ways every element is functioned together or 'Know-why', and the strategic purpose which is applied from integrating know-how and know-why together or 'Know-what'. (Van Den Bosch & Van Wijk, 2001) Therefore, the process of knowledge sharing is believed to connect communication area to the learning area by the sharing processes. (Chouikha & Dakhli 2012)

Ideally, the characteristics of knowledge sharing must comprise of a single main point of transmissions where there is no barrier for employees to access and create the knowledge base and the knowledge system must be connected at anywhere by anytime. Besides, the knowledge sharing system must be easy to use and must allow all user to function in their native language. (Buckman, 1998) However, knowledge sharing in practical are more complex since they are influenced by the multi-level-motivational factors which are individual level, team level, and organizational level.

Starts with the individual level, the individual characteristics or the professional characteristics of working members are proved to take part in generating quality of knowledge and how efficiency knowledge was right sent when knowledge sharing process is set. Consequently, the working experiences, working practices, job

function styles, values, and self's actions related to the job were perceived to have positive impacts on knowledge sharing outcomes on the individual level. (Kim, 2007; Yang, et.al, 2013; Zheng 2017) For Thailand, Yodwisitsak (2004) said the motivational factors in the individual level are the ability to access and process information of Thai people. He also highlighted that it is more difficult for Thai people who strongly cling to Thai Culture to create new knowledge and acquire knowledge that already existed.

Secondly, the motivational factors in the team level. These factors are created from social interact of individuals in the team and are proved to have impact on creating and acquiring knowledge or sharing knowledge since they are the orientation to knowledge, power distance, and Collectivism/Individualism. Therefore, these motivational factors are important to the knowledge sharing climate and the outcomes of knowledge sharing of the organization. (Kim, 2007; Yang, et.al, 2013; Zheng 2017) While, Boondao (2013) showed the motivational factors affecting knowledge management and knowledge sharing in team level of Thai organization are technology infrastructure, trustworthy teamwork, employee empowerment, leadership, working structure, and roles and responsibilities.

Lastly, the motivational factors in organizational level. These factors are organizational culture, organizational climate, working incentives, working measurement, infrastructure, and organizational management. (Kim, 2007; Yang, et.al, 2013; Chouikha & Dakhli, 2012; Zheng 2017) Chouikha & Dakhli (2012) also emphasized that organization might face the problems of knowledge sharing across working team and cross organization by not meeting the motivational factors in organizational level. For Thailand, the infrastructure of organizations including literacy level of employees, level of Information Technology, and the communication network were proved to have impact on knowledge sharing in organization. While Suwetwattanakul (2010) and Boondao (2013) said that other motivational factors affecting knowledge sharing in the organizational level are mission and strategy of organization, level of involvement, information systems, organizational climate, and the incentives to share knowledge in the individual level, performance measurement, and infrastructure management.

2.4 Summary of literature reviews and conceptual framework

In sum, the literature reviews shown knowledge sharing processes in general working teams are comprised of the following key dimensions which are the nature characteristics of SMEs, cross-functional team in SMEs con-text, knowledge sharing in the organization, and motivational factors influencing knowledge sharing outcomes as detailed in the table below. (Table 2.1)

Table 2.6 Summarize of the literature study on knowledge sharing in organization

Dimensions	Knowledge Sharing in General Researches
Nature characteristics of SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low ability to access and process information (Yodwisitsak, 2004) • The hierarchical structure of organizational information and communication flow (Yodwisitsak, 2004) • Cross-level and multi-level relationship. (Önday, 2016) • Inequality in the involvement level of working members (Yodwisitsak, 2004; Suwetwattanakul, 2010; Boondao, 2013)
Cross-functional team in SMEs context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proved to enhance SMEs outcomes by creating the availability of resource management, knowledge management, and creating organizational culture that accommodate the new ways of operation (Pylväs, 2012) • Creates positive impacts on the major change in product/service, the major restructuring outcomes, the new ownership of organization, the change in management personnel, the changes to structure of workforce, and the major new plant, equipment and technology. (Wiesner, et.al., 2004) • Improves functional flexibility of the working team and performances by functional flexibility of the working team that includes problem solving, job enrichment, and self-managing team (Önday, 2016) • Has interdependent relationship with knowledge management outcomes. (Oliveira, et.al., 2015)

Table 2.6 Summarize of the literature study on knowledge sharing in organization (cont.)

Dimensions	Knowledge Sharing in General Researches
Knowledge sharing in the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing knowledge in operational system of organization and can be shared or transferred by the motivating force which could be intrinsic motivators or extrinsic motivators. (Oye, et.al., 2011; Van Den Bosch & Van Wijk, 2001) • Knowledge sharing connects communication area to the learning area by the overlap areas sharing processes. (Chouikha & Dakhli, 2012) • Knowledge sharing are influenced by the multi-level-motivational factors which are individual level, team level, and organizational level. (Kim, 2007; Yang, et.al, 2013; Zheng 2017) • Knowledge sharing connect communication area to the learning area by the overlap areas sharing processes. (Chouikha & Dakhli, 2012) • The setting of sharing system that easiest to use and must allow to every (Buckman, 1998)
Motivational factors influencing knowledge sharing outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Level: The orientation to knowledge, power distance, and Collectivism/Individualism are important factors on knowledge sharing climate and the outcomes of knowledge sharing of the organization. (EunJee K., 2007; Faizuniah P., Aizzat M. N., 2013; Tingting Z., 2017) • Team Level: low ability to access and process information, the level of Information Technology, the communication network, and organization structure (Kangwan Y., 2004), Level of involvement, Information Systems, working climate, measurement on performances, and infrastructure management (Chokchai S., 2010 : Roongrasamee B.,2013), and incentives (Mouna B. and Salem B., 2012) • Individual Level: ‘Saving face’ and ‘Kreng-jai’ (เกรงใจ) culture (Kangwan Y., 2004), looking ahead and avoiding conflicts (Nattavud P., 2012)

The relationship between each dimension can be illustrated as shown in the figure 2.1

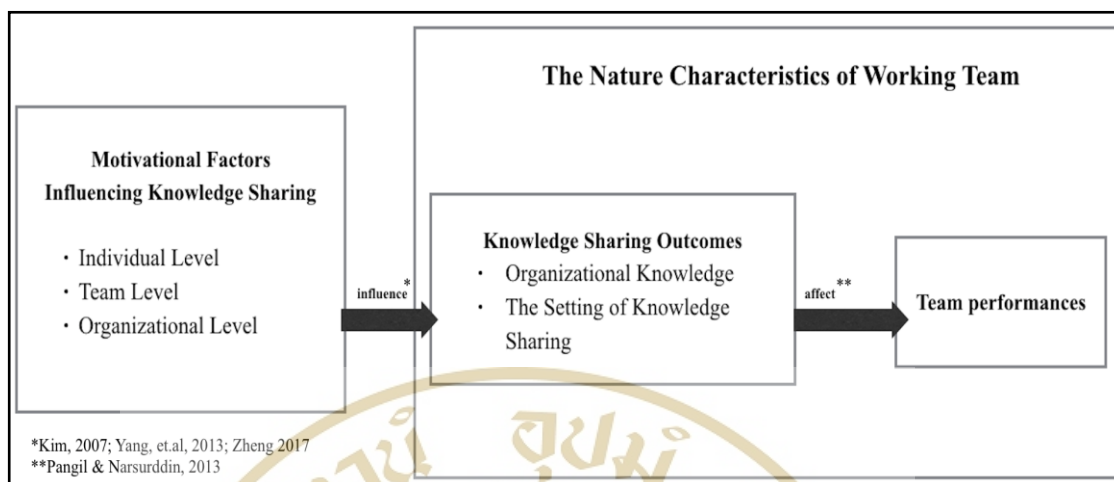


Figure 2.1 The conceptual framework of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team

From the previous studies on knowledge sharing in the organization, they showed influencing impacts of multi-level of motivational factors on knowledge sharing outcomes, the effect of knowledge sharing outcomes on the team performances, and the impacts of nature characteristics on knowledge sharing outcomes and team performances. For knowledge sharing outcomes, they are created from organizational knowledge which are the inputs and the setting of knowledge sharing which are the methods and tools that working team use to share organizational knowledge across team members.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides description on the research methodology which comprises of research approaches, data sampling, and tools of data collection and data analysis. In brief, the study used qualitative approaches to get deeper understanding about the perception on organizational knowledge, the setting, the context, and the motivational factors influencing knowledge sharing of cross-functional team and to capture insightful results of the study. The data sampling used in this study are 20 members of SMEs cross-functional teams who participated in the one-on-one interview session where their given results were analyzed by coding methods as detailed below.

3.1 Research Approach

The aim of using qualitative approach in this study is to provide detailed narrative of perceptions and experiences toward knowledge sharing of SMEs cross-functional teams. The flexibility structure of qualitative approach is proved to help researchers provide sufficiency freedom for participants to response to the complex issues. Besides, this approach is widely used as it is primarily on deeper insights, feelings, opinions, and inner experiences of participants (Atieno O.P., 2009; Rahman M.S., 2017). However, it is needed to measure on the validity and reliability of study findings when using qualitative approach as a research approach (Golafshani N., 2013). Sousa (2014) mentioned about the qualifying measurement and techniques of validity and reliability in qualitative approach that participants used as data sampling have to offer fertile example of the study theme where the adequacy of data is measured by the subjective experience of participants that answer the research question. Therefore, this study conducts interviews only with the individuals in SMEs cross-functional team and it keeps interview until participants begin to answer in the same direction or answer.

Besides, the study uses different questions under the same topic to identify and test validity of the data collected from participants.

From the past, there are several studies used qualitative approach on studying knowledge management processes, the working structure, and employee of the organization. For example, Wei, et.al. (2003) used qualitative approach to provide better understanding of knowledge management with intensive review on current application on knowledge management in China. Chouikha & Dakhli (2012) used qualitative research to purpose the framework that illustrates the main aspects of knowledge sharing and how it can improve the knowledge sharing process of the organization. Van Den Bosch & Van Wjik (2001) used qualitative approach to provide deep understanding about how managerial knowledge can sustain competitiveness of the organization. Zheng (2017) used qualitative approach to study on different concepts of knowledge sharing and to categorize the motivational factors affecting knowledge sharing in the organization. Oliveira, et.al. (2015) used qualitative approach to contribute the set of characteristics of cross-functional team in different dimensions of different organizations. Consequently, the publications of these studies have ensured that using qualitative approach is appropriate for studying and acquiring insightful results from members in the organizations.

3.2 Data Sampling

Since SMEs comprise the largest portion in Thailand economy and Bangkok is the area that has the highest density of these enterprises therefore, this study focusses on SMEs with cross-functional team(s) which located in Bangkok area. Therefore, the data sampling are members of SMEs cross-functional team which this study has the total numbers of participants of 20 persons. This study use convenience sampling as a method for drawing the data samples of the study. This is because of the characteristics of the target population who hardly find the available time and are not willing to participate with the study.

3.3 Tools of Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study uses in-depth interview (one-on-one interview) as a tool of data collection. This tool was used to acquire insight from participants and exchange ideas with them. From the interview, this study has the open-ended questions used to encourage participants to provide the partial insights and express their personal views while probing technique is used to ensure the validity of the collecting data. The interview questions is designed to understand each of cross-functional team and its organization including a brief of their organization profile, vision, mission, working team structure, working team objectives, number of team members, role and responsibilities of the interviewees, and their working experiences in the current position. Therefore, the answers and information gained from the study are more like the point of views from each participant.

For the tool of data analysis, this study used coding method to analyze interviewed data as this method provide the systematic pattern to tackle crucial insights and perception acquired from the interview. Saldana J. (2009), explained in his study that the initial stage of analyzing qualitative data is to codify raw data into the subtle and tacit phrases or sentences. But, coding is complex and cyclical processes where different coding methods can overlap with each other. Besides, there are several patterns of summarizing word into a code which are similarity pattern, difference pattern, sequence pattern, correspondence pattern, and causation pattern. According to Saldana's streamlined codes-to-theory model, the processes of developing theory from qualitative data start when researcher summarizes all essential words from primary and/or secondary sources of data into codes. Then the codes were codified into explicit words or phrase before developed into subtle and tacit outcomes or the theme(s) or the

concept(s) of the qualitative study and developed further into an abstract theory of the findings as illustrated below. (Figure 3.1)

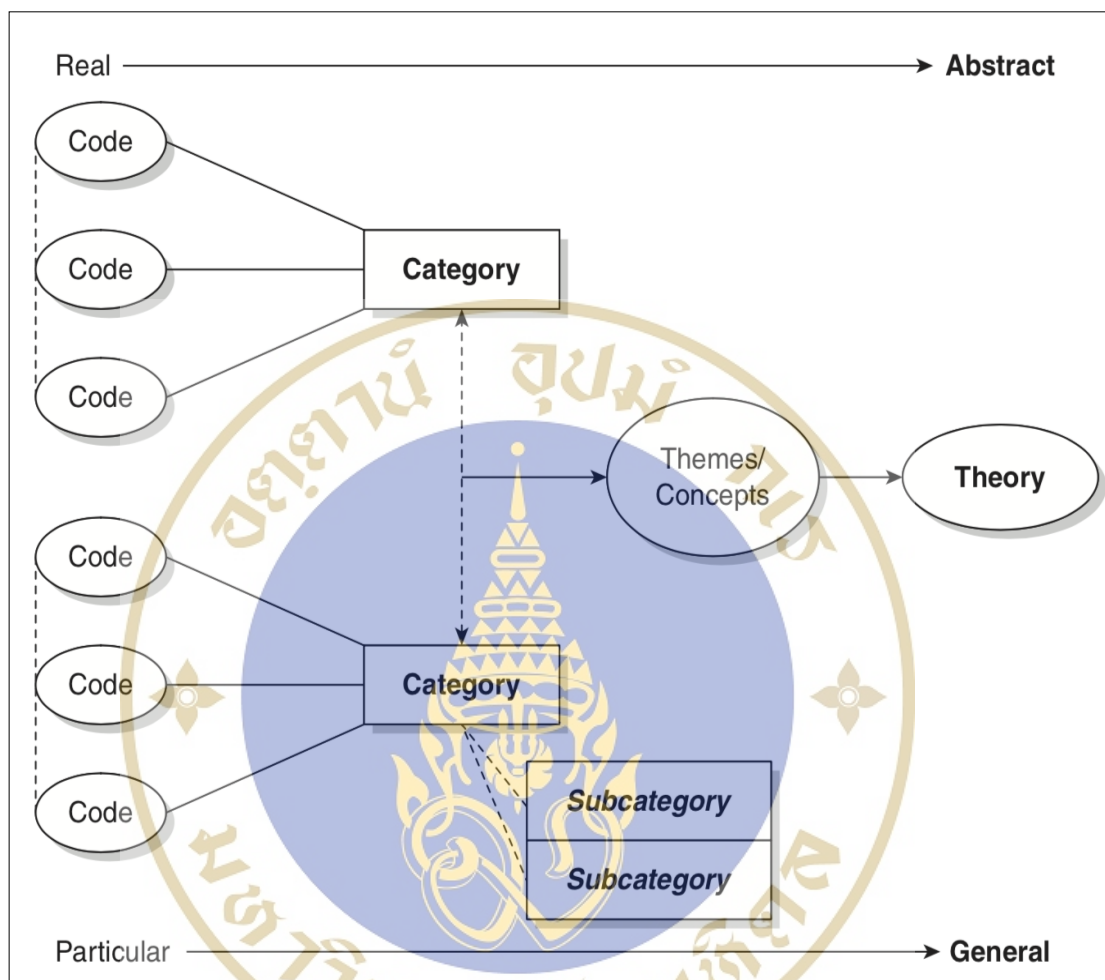


Figure 3.1 A streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry

Resource: The coding manual for qualitative researcher (Saldana J., 2009)

Therefore, the coding methods is used to help the study develop the theme of the study which are ‘Knowledge Sharing under SMEs Cross-functional Team Context’ and help the study grouping interview data into four categories which comprise of the perception toward organizational knowledge of individuals in SMEs cross-functional team, the setting of knowledge sharing in cross-functional team, the nature Characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team, and motivational factors influenced knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter contain of the findings from 20 participants who are SMEs cross-functional team members from 8 organizations. The below table provide the detail of all participants in this study. (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1 The list of participants

Team	Business Industry	Participants
Content Production Team	Marketing Industry (Digital Marketing Agency)	- CEO/Sales and Account Executive (Age 38) - Assistant to CEO/Project manager (Age 27) - Project Manager/Google Analytics Specialist (Age 29)
Content Production Team	Marketing Industry (Creative Marketing Agency)	- Experience Designer (Age 27) - Story Curator (Age 26) - Story Curator (Age 29)
Content Production Team	Mass Media Industry (Digital Content Agency)	- Art Director (Age 27) - Project Manager (Age 30) - Creative (Age 22)
Content Production Team	Mass Media Industry (Music Label)	- Graphic Designer (Age 23)
Product Development Team	Mass Media Industry (Film)	- CEO (Age 29) - Film Director (Age 31) - Production Manager (Age 27)

Table 4.1 The list of participants (cont.)

Team	Business Industry	Participants
Product Development Team	Marketing Industry (Music Marketing Agency)	- User Experience (UX) researcher (Age 28) - Programmer (Age 28) - Content Writer (Age 22)
Business Supporting Team	Social Enterprise Industry (Local Tourism)	- Knowledge Management Manager (Age 29) - Human Resource Development Manager (Age 29) - PR and Branding (Age 27)
Event Organizer Team	Entertainment Industry (Domestic Event)	- Event coordinator (Age 25)

After conducted in-depth interview (one-on-one interview) with all participants and applied coding methods to develop the theme of the study and categorize findings into main categories. The study found there are four main categories of finding as discussed follows.

4.1 Organizational knowledge

In this study, it is believed that the main component and the fundamental of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team are organizational knowledge. According to the participants, knowledge sharing could not occur without knowledge and information of organization. From the study, it found that individuals in SMEs cross-functional team have the same perception toward the term 'organizational knowledge' to those of general working team as resulted in the study of Van Den Bosch & Van Wijk (2015). The individuals in SMEs cross-functional teams perceived the term 'organizational knowledge' as the lessons learned from their everyday job. The organizational knowledge are 'know-how', 'know-what', 'know-why' and information acquired from operating their organization's businesses. There are numeral words that participants used to refer his/her organizational knowledge. For example, working

knowledge, information of the organization, organizational structure, rules and regulations of organization, information of the stakeholders, market research, marketing knowledge, management knowledge, information about competitors, communication knowledge, human resource management knowledge, and creativity which were linked with the vision and mission of their organizations. Moreover, the study noticed that the more working experiences, the more individuals in SMEs cross-functional team can provide more description on this term and here are example answers between interviewees who has few working experiences in the team to those who have many years of working experiences with team members from the different field of knowledge:

"Organizational knowledge is the knowledge that helps organization achieving its missions."

- An event coordinator in event organizer team (Event Organizer)
2 months of working experiences in the current position

"Organizational knowledge is the understanding about the working processes of our organization based on the working project, working flows, and working status. We are a publishing organization. I think there is a lot of knowledge that is our organizational knowledge, for example, communication and interpretation knowledge."

- A creative in digital content production team (Digital Content Agency)
4 months of working experiences in the current position

And,

"Organizational knowledge is the understanding about organization's stakeholders. Also, knowledge acquired from everyone in the organization whether they are tacit knowledge or explicit knowledge"

- A knowledge management manager in business supporting team
(Social Enterprise Company)
4 years of working experiences in the current position

Apart from the perception toward the term of organizational knowledge, the study also found that there is interdependent relationship between knowledge sharing outcomes and the team performance as this relationship were found between knowledge management and the team performance resulted in the study of Oliveira, et.al. (2015). There are several answers stated that organizational knowledge were created after the individual keep working on the tasks repeatedly until they got the lesson learned from their works. They believe that individuals can improve outcomes by working and learn organizational knowledge from working with other members, others' working experiences and lessons learned of the organization as ones said:

"Organizational knowledge is knowledge shared from working experiences of the organization. They are the combination of individuals' skills of every member in an organization. They are non-static knowledge we learned from keeping working"

- A story curator in content development team
(Creative Marketing Agency)
3 years of working experiences in the current position

And,

"Organizational knowledge are knowledge refined from what an organization is an expert of or from what we learned as repeatedly working processes."

- An experience designer in content development team
(Creative Marketing Agency)
3 years of working experiences in the current position

So far, this study provided the new finding on the interdependent relationship between knowledge sharing outcomes and SMEs cross-functional team performances. This is because the lesson learned of individuals can impacts the team performance while the team performance can create the new lesson learned that will be use as organizational knowledge as well. However, it is needed a further study on the setting of knowledge sharing processes/sessions in SMEs cross-functional team since the study would like to understand about the connecting between communication area

and learning area in SMEs cross-functional team and to evaluate power to setting up knowledge sharing system of every team member.

4.2 The setting of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team

In this study, the setting of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team refer to the ways that individuals in the team setup knowledge sharing session or the session that allow members to exchange and share knowledge or information that benefits their careers. The study showed that the ways SMEs cross-functional team setup knowledge sharing is similar to the process of connecting communication area with the learning area as same as those of general organizations that shown in the study of Chouikha & Dakhli (2012). It is found that the components in the setting of knowledge sharing session in SMEs cross-functional team comprises of the curator, sharing agenda, sharing occasion, and knowledge sharing tools. While the differences between the setup processes of the general working team and the cross-functional team are the consistency of having knowledge sharing session and those who can initiate the sharing session. In SMEs cross-functional team, everyone is allow to initiate the sharing session for example, whenever after someone inn the team has attended to the new workshops or seminars. However, there is a formal ways of setting up the knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team which every participant perceived it has the most consistency that is the meeting curated by the team director who is the project manager, department director, or the CEO. This formal setting is the same as the study found of general working teams. Several participants mentioned about equality power of setting up knowledge sharing and the involvement of top management in the team that:

"Anyone in the team can set up a meeting when need to discuss the project or gather some idea from other members."

-An assistant to CEO and project manager in content production team
(Digital Marketing Agency)

"I am the curator of the weekly meeting that include learning session where anyone can share interesting trends, gadgets, or new working techniques to the team."

- A content producer in digital content production team
(Digital Content Agency)

Working at the office 5 days a week.

8 months of working experiences in the current position

"Anyone can set up knowledge sharing session after learned something benefits and interesting for the team."

- A content writer in product development team
(Music Marketing Agency)

And,

"Our project manager created the weekly meeting for us to update our working progress as some of us did not come to the office every day and the meeting comprises of sharing session."

- A art director in digital content production team
(Digital Content Agency)

When compared to the general working team, the knowledge sharing sessions of SMEs cross-functional team are more casual and informal. The interview found individuals in the team tend to use new technology and new innovation facilitating their ways of setting up. Secondary from face-to-face communication, all the live chat applications -Google Hangout, Slack, Line, and Facebook messenger- are used as both communication and knowledge sharing tool. The study found these consequences are influenced by the cultural characteristics of the working team and organization structure as referred by participants. For example,

"We organized the lesson learned and operational information in Google Drive. It is convenience for everyone to access the lessons learned and other information when we are working from a different place."

- A human resource development manager in business supporting team
(Social Enterprise)

"Our organization have Team Drives in Google Drive for each team to upload and backup their working projects. However, our team does not think we need to upload anything on Google Drive."

- A programmer in product development team
(Music Marketing Agency)

And,

"Our team will meet only we need to discuss and brainstorm the idea for the client. Normally, our team will use line group to keep everyone on the same page."

- An event coordinator in event organizer team
(Event Organizer)
5 months of working experiences in the current position

Therefore, these reflected to the influence of the nature characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team to the setting of their knowledge sharing session and it is interesting to study further on the nature characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team.

4.3 Nature characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team

The nature characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team in this study cover the context of the working environment, social interaction between organization members, and culture characteristics of the organization as the study aims to understand the relevant between the nature characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team and their knowledge sharing session.

Firstly, SMEs cross-functional team has strong point in placing importance on every member in the team equally even the team and organization are operated in vertical structure (have a project manager or team director taking care the overview of their team projects). Therefore, this result contrasts with those of general organization in the previous studies of Yodwisitsak (2004) and Önday (2016). SMEs cross-functional team seems to have less power distance between each individual and this was reflected by one of the participants who is also the CEO, sales and AE for the digital marketing team, he said:

"I do not believe that having structure will improve the working efficiency of the team. I do not believe in KPIs. The only competition they would have are competing with themselves from yesterday."

- A CEO who is also a sales/AE in digital content marketing team
(Digital Marketing Agency)
4 years of working experiences in the current position

Secondly, the level of involvement in the knowledge sharing process of cross-functional team members are high as it depends on the working team culture and climate. For example, the family-like working climate caused perception of low competition, medium to high intimacy level between team members without being influenced by Thai culture characteristics which are face-value and Krong-Jai. Most of the participants have highly willingness to ask for knowledge and information from others and willing to take any action that will help the team to accomplish its working objectives, for example:

"Here we are working like family. We believe in each other capability to work on our specialties. I believe this kind of working atmosphere has influenced us a lot on sharing knowledge or anything we see it benefits for all of us."

- A project manager and assistant to CEO in digital content production team
(Digital Marketing Agency)
2 and a half years of working experiences in the current position

Lastly, the findings show the efficiency of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team is not influenced by the hierarchical structure of organizational information, communication flow, and the cross-level and/or multi-level relationship between team members. This is because these factors are dominated by the individuals' characteristics which comprises of open communication, communicate freely, encourage indifferent opinion, mutually accountable, and trust. So that, the organizational structure do not play an important role in knowledge sharing process and its efficiency in SMEs cross-functional team since the natural characteristics of individuals in SMEs cross-functional team creating the norm and nature characteristics of the working team. Besides, these characteristics can enhance the ability to access and process information and reduce inequality in the involvement level of team members. The study results also contrasts with what have happened in the general working team especially of those organization with the strong hierarchical structure as shown in the study of Yodwisitsak (2004), Suwetwattanakul (2010), and Boondao (2013). The study found the nature characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team can prevent the impacts of Thai culture characteristics of face-value, face-saving, and kreng-jai on knowledge sharing efficiency and this was supported with motivational factors in multi-level as the study has discussed in the following part.

4.4. Motivational factors influencing knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional Team

According to the study of Oye, at.el. (2011), knowledge will be shared or transferred when there are motivational factors force individual to. Therefore, this part is to study on the motivational factors influencing SMEs cross-functional team members to share knowledge with each other. The category of motivational factors categorized by the coding methods comprises of three main categories which are organizational level, team level, and individual level as detailed below.

4.4.1 Organizational level

The motivational factors in Organizational level in this study are the vision, and core value of the organization, working environment or working climate, and social

interaction between top management and the team. The study results added on from the previous studies of Suwetwattanakul (2010) and Boondao (2013) about motivational factors in general organization that for SMEs cross-functional team the mission and vision of the organization, working environment or working climate, infrastructure of organization, technology, and social interaction can cause either positive or neutral impacts on knowledge sharing performances.

First of all, the vision and core value that place important on knowledge or self-learner can endorse and increase the willingness to share knowledge with team members and members across their team. Besides, participants in the organizations that place importance on knowledge said they can feel the working climate and working environment that support knowledge sharing in their organization. However, SMEs cross-functional team who believe that the organization does not have impact on their willingness to share knowledge across team members said the feeling of being separated from other working team in the organization and no company policies about knowledge sharing resulting in the less social interaction across working team. For example,

"I and others do not feel we have much social interaction with other teams in the company. I do not feel there are any policies in the organization that support knowledge sharing across the working team."

- A user experience researcher in product development team
(Music Marketing Agency)

And,

"I do not think we have much social interaction with others outside our team. I think the working climate in our team is different from the working climate of the organization"

- An art director in content production team
(Digital Content Agency)

Therefore, the motivational factors in organizational level that can improve knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team are the vision and core value that foster organizational knowledge and knowledge sharing in individuals' minds. Secondly, the policies can help support individuals to share more knowledge and to strengthen working environment and working climate that supporting knowledge

sharing in organization. Lastly, the social interaction in organization do not have much effect on knowledge sharing within the SMEs cross-functional team but, it is good for knowledge sharing across working team in the organization. However, only the motivational factors in organization level are not enough to improve knowledge sharing performances of SMEs cross-functional team since there are more motivational factors in the team level and the individual level as well.

4.4.2 Team level

The motivational factors in the team level of SMEs cross-functional team found in this study are social interaction, team intimacy, teamwork, understanding, trust, and harmony in the team. These are the motivational factors that participants perceived as factors that help promote knowledge sharing within the team members. One said,

"We always communicate to each other. As a team, we do not mind or question on someone who seems to have fewer roles and responsibilities in a project even that we receive the same amount of bonus. I do not think that the hierarchy affect our feeling on sharing knowledge with each other."

- A project manager/google analytics specialist
in digital content production team
(Digital Marketing Agency)

In sum, the motivational factors in the team level of SMEs cross-functional team that are perceived to have impacts on knowledge sharing performances are those involving the social interaction in the team which are the power distance and collectivism characteristics. Therefore, the results of SMEs cross-functional team are similar to those of working team in general where social interact of individuals in the team and are proved to have impact on creating and acquiring knowledge or sharing knowledge since they are the orientation to knowledge, power distance, and Collectivism/Individualism (Kim, 2007; Yang, et.al, 2013; Boondao, 2013; Zheng, 2017). Moreover, the study found that the nature characteristics is a very important factor that can determine the knowledge sharing performances and the team outcomes. This is because the SMEs cross-functional teams believe that with their nature characteristics, the change of working structure cannot affect the ways they share

knowledge and the willingness to share knowledge across team members. The participants said that what can affect their nature characteristics are the personalities of team members and (mutual) working incentives rewarding their team performances. They said nature characteristics of the team will change when lot of their team members behave different and mutual incentives can motivated them to put their hard effort on their works including knowledge sharing with the team members. Therefore, the most impact motivational factors affecting knowledge sharing in the team level are the nature characteristics of the team, social interaction across team members, and the mutual incentives for the team rewarding their performances.

4.4.3 Individual level

For SMEs cross-functional team, the motivational factors categorized in the individual level are mainly about the personalities of individuals in the team where members have self-attitude of responsible, self-directed, self-giving, self-motivated, involved, flexibility, and enthusiastic can motivate individuals in SMEs cross-functional team to approach other team members for learning or sharing knowledge. For example.

“If I don't know, I will ask someone who know or serf on inputs myself. I personally do not think that ‘I just graduated’ is an acceptable accuse for not being enthusiastic.”

- A creative in digital content production team
(Digital Content Agency)

“I do not mind being taught by others. I think all is fine even if I do not want to know. Also, I am willing to help others when they would like to know something I understand better than them.”

- A user experience researcher in product development team
(Music Marketing Agency)

This is similar with the studies on motivational factors affecting knowledge sharing in general working team of Kim (2007), Yang, et.al. (2013) and Zheng (2017) where professional characteristics of working members have taken part in generating quality of knowledge and how efficiency knowledge was directly send across team

members. Also, the working experiences, working practices, job function styles, values, and self's actions related to the job of SMEs cross-functional team members were perceived to have positive impacts on knowledge sharing outcomes on the individual level as well.

Meanwhile, the personalities can be the barrier of sharing knowledge in SMEs cross-functional team as it can cause negative feeling and negative attitude toward learning from others and being taught by others. However, the demotivating personalities affecting knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team are different from those resulted in the study of Yodwisitsak (2004) where individuals in the Thai organization are strongly cling to Thai Culture to create new knowledge and acquire knowledge that already existed. The common demotivating personalities showed in this study of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team are the 'ego' and the lack in self-confidence can be another person that blocks knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team. For example,

"I, myself, hate when people told me and I do not like teaching others. I believe that we should not do thing we do not like to others and I do not like being told and being teach about things I already know.

- A content writer in product development team
(Music Marketing Agency)

"I believe when it comes to my responsibilities, people should respect me and let me work in my own way. I do not feel right when people tell me what I should do about my responsibilities"

- A project manager in digital content production team
(Digital Content Agency)

And,

"Sometimes I felt lack of confidence to ask my seniors about technical terms so, I asked my friends out of the team and also out of the company to explain to me what I need to know."

- An event co-ordinator in event organizer team
(Event Organizer)

Also, the study found the key factors influencing knowledge sharing of individuals in SMEs cross-functional team in the individual level are the sense of harmony, acceptance, and trust level of the individuals. Everyone who participated in this study indicated that they did not feel any competition between each other, and they only focus on the competition with themselves which motivated them for self-improvement and improve knowledge sharing efficiency of the team.

In conclusion, the study can visualize all findings by the following picture. (Figure 4.1)

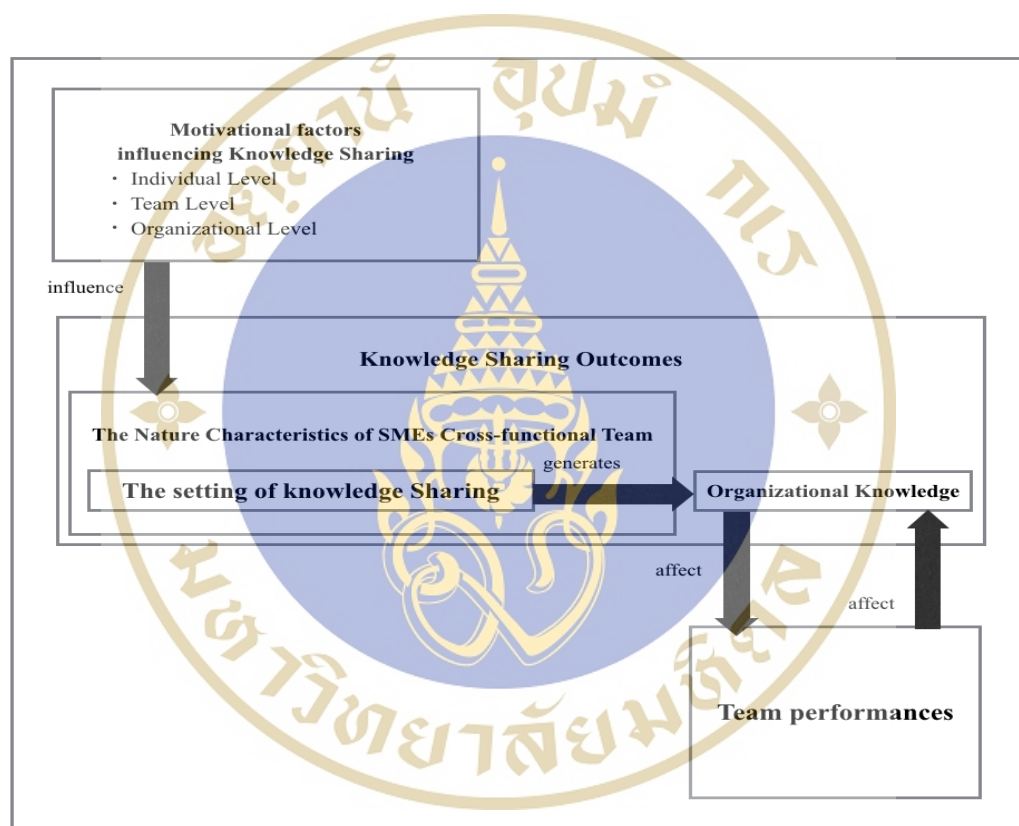


Figure 4.1 The findings of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team

This picture has several different from the study framework (Figure 4.1). Now, the findings on knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team study results how motivational factors can pass their impacts onto the knowledge sharing outcomes of SMEs cross-functional team which is through the nature characteristics of the team. It shows the relevant between the nature characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team and the setting of knowledge sharing sessions which generates the outcomes as the

organizational knowledge. Besides, the new finding shows these organizational knowledges are the fundamental of both knowledge sharing outcomes and the team performances where there is interdependent relationship between knowledge sharing outcomes and team performances.



CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The completion of this study does not bring only the understanding of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team but also, brought out insights that can develop into the strategies for improving team performances. It indicates that there are interdependent relationship between knowledge sharing outcomes and the team performance where the SMEs cross-functional team can enhance its team performances by sharing organizational knowledge and also can improve knowledge sharing outcomes through sharing the lesson learned from team performances. At the same time, the knowledge sharing outcomes are influenced by the nature characteristics of SMEs cross-functional team where it set how the team will conduct the knowledge sharing process and these nature characteristics are influenced from multi-level of motivational factors which are in organizational level, team level, and individual level. Therefore, SMEs can improve their cross-functional team performances through the improvement of motivational factors in the knowledge sharing process.

The study is of the opinion that apart from recruiting for cultural fit, the shared vision, knowledge sharing culture characteristics, and mutual team incentives play an important role of growing and strengthening willingness of the cross-functional team to share knowledge among team members. Besides, it is believed that the managing of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team can also be perceived as the fundamental practice of knowledge sharing management in the organization level as a cross-functional team is comprised of many individuals from different knowledge background and fields of specialization.

5.2 Recommendations

The theoretical contributions from this study are to monitor on motivational factors influencing knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team. The study findings indicate that SMEs should create and retain the motivational factors affecting knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team especially sense of harmony, acceptance, and trust level among team members. Besides, they should prevent and eliminate all possible demotivating factors affecting knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team including ego and face-value.

For the managerial implications, this study recommends SMEs to enhance the cross-functional team performance through the empowering of knowledge sharing process in organization. First of all, SMEs should create and foster the working environment supporting knowledge sharing in their cross-functional teams by having the shared vision of knowledge sharing, core value that embrace knowledge sharing in the organization, and policies which are used to communicate and educate their employee about how important of knowledge sharing to them. For example, the shared vision of knowledge sharing in organization could be 'to have the best in knowledge-sharing culture that lead to the sustained competitive advantages'. Secondly, SMEs should include knowledge sharing incentives into their working policies. For example, the team mutual rewards for the new knowledge, new innovation from knowledge sharing that help the team to improve its capability. Therefore, these team mutual rewards communicated through organization policies can enhance the willingness to share knowledge among individuals in the team which is not only in the team level but also, the organizational level. Thirdly, the organizations should focus on foster knowledge sharing environment by keep communicate to their people about how knowledge sharing can help them to success in their career and how knowledge sharing can reward them. It is also important for SMEs to improve social interact in the organization since it can affect the working environment of the organization as well. Therefore, using the recruiting for cultural fit can help organization to retain the knowledge sharing environment by selecting the right members with the right attitudes and personalities into the cross-functional team. Next, the setting of cleared and separated KPIs can help improving knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team by prevent the feeling of competition across different roles and responsibilities in the

team. Also, the shaping of learning mindsets of less ego and more openness to the variety of knowledge can enhance individuals in SMEs cross-functional teams to be more open for knowledge and working tactics from others team members.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are the small sample size and a few different of business sectors and industries participated in the study. Therefore, the further research of knowledge sharing in SMEs cross-functional team should expand into more different business sectors and industries. Besides, it should combine with the qualitative approach to provide supporting statistical data on the relationship between each motivational factor on knowledge sharing outcomes.



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