

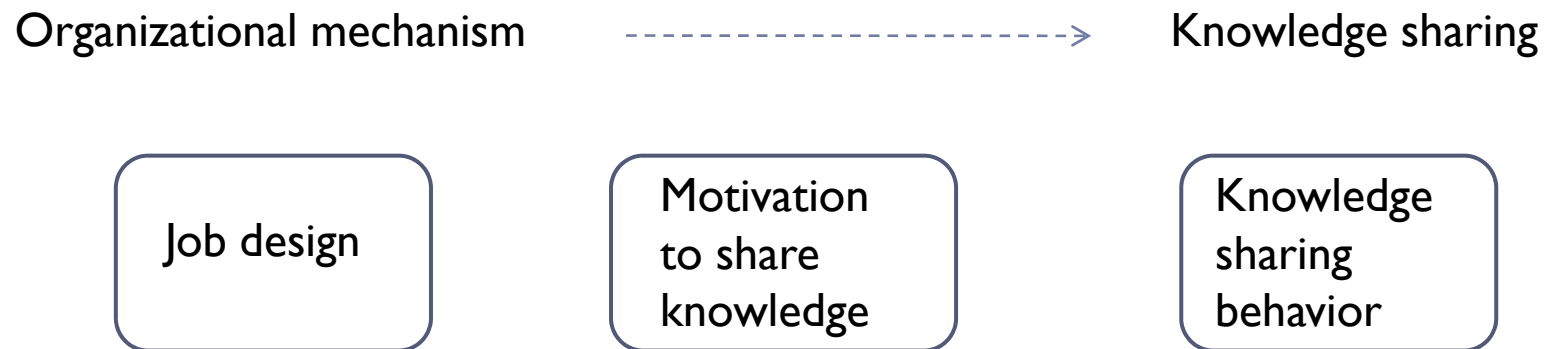
# Encouraging Knowledge Sharing Among Employees: How Job Design Matter

Nicolai Foss, Dana B. Minbaeva, Torben Pedersen, Mia Reinholt  
Center for Strategic Management and Globalization  
Copenhagen Business School

# Overview

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- ▶ We argue that job design may impact specific employee motivations, namely motivations to share knowledge, and for this reason, job design is an antecedent of actual knowledge sharing behaviors in organizations.



# Job Design and Job Characteristics

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- ▶ Traditionally, the focus of job design has been on the job itself rather than on the specific individuals who are to assume the job.
- ▶ Yet, that job design has motivational consequences has been known for a long time (e.g., Lawler et al., 1973).
- ▶ Jobs imply certain job characteristics and these have psychological implications.



## Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Sims et al., 1976)

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- ▶ *Autonomy* concerns whether the job provides the employee with the opportunity to decide when and how to carry out specific tasks
- ▶ *Task identity* is the degree to which the job provides the opportunity to undertake tasks in the job from the beginning to the end.
- ▶ *Feedback* is the degree to which the employees receive direct and clear information about their performance as they carry out the tasks required by the job.



# Types of Motivation

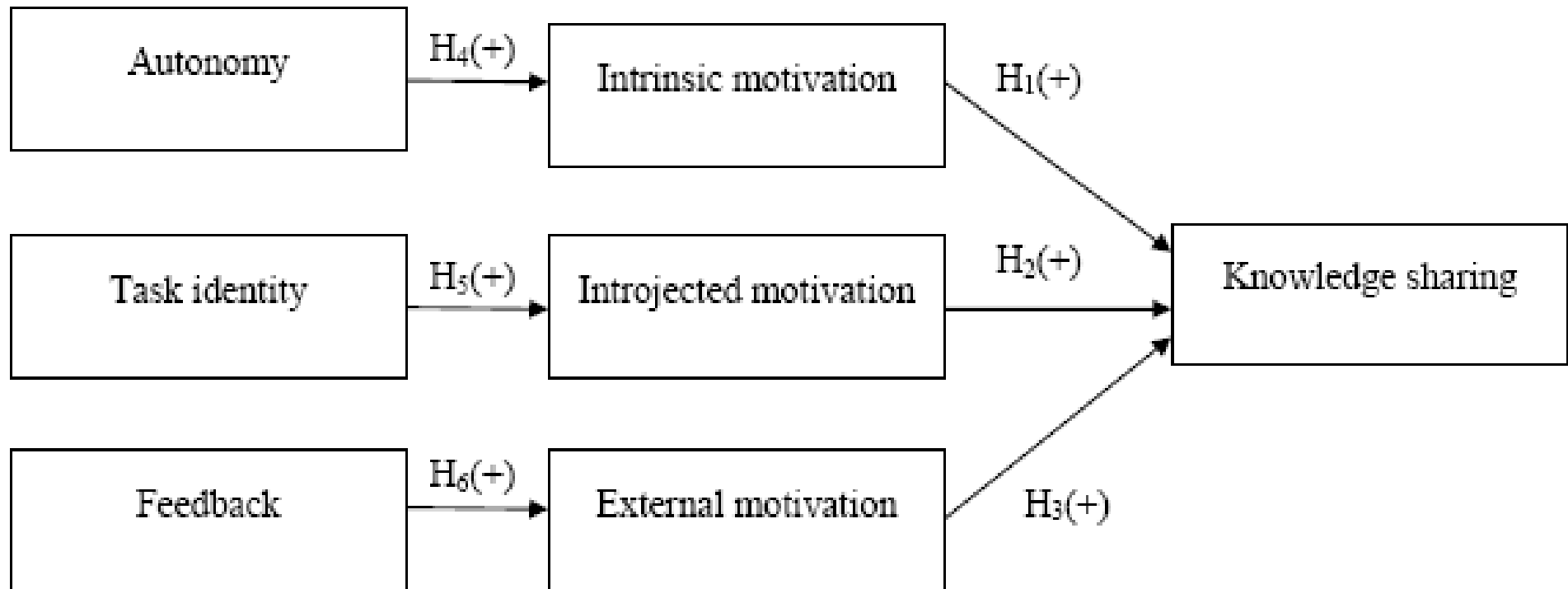
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- ▶ *External* motivation involves that an individual engages in an activity to attain a positive or avoid a negative external outcome.
  - ▶ the reason underlying the behavior is not inherent in the behavior itself, but is rather instrumental in obtaining separate outcomes.
- ▶ *Intrinsic* motivation involves doing an activity because it holds intrinsic interest for the individual and is in accord with personal values
  - ▶ enjoyment is thus derived from conducting the behavior *per se*
- ▶ *Introjection* occurs when an individual "takes in" an external regulation, but does not accept it as her own
  - ▶ external regulation is internalized such that it is the individual herself rather than another individual that regulates behavior.



# Theoretical Model

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# Method

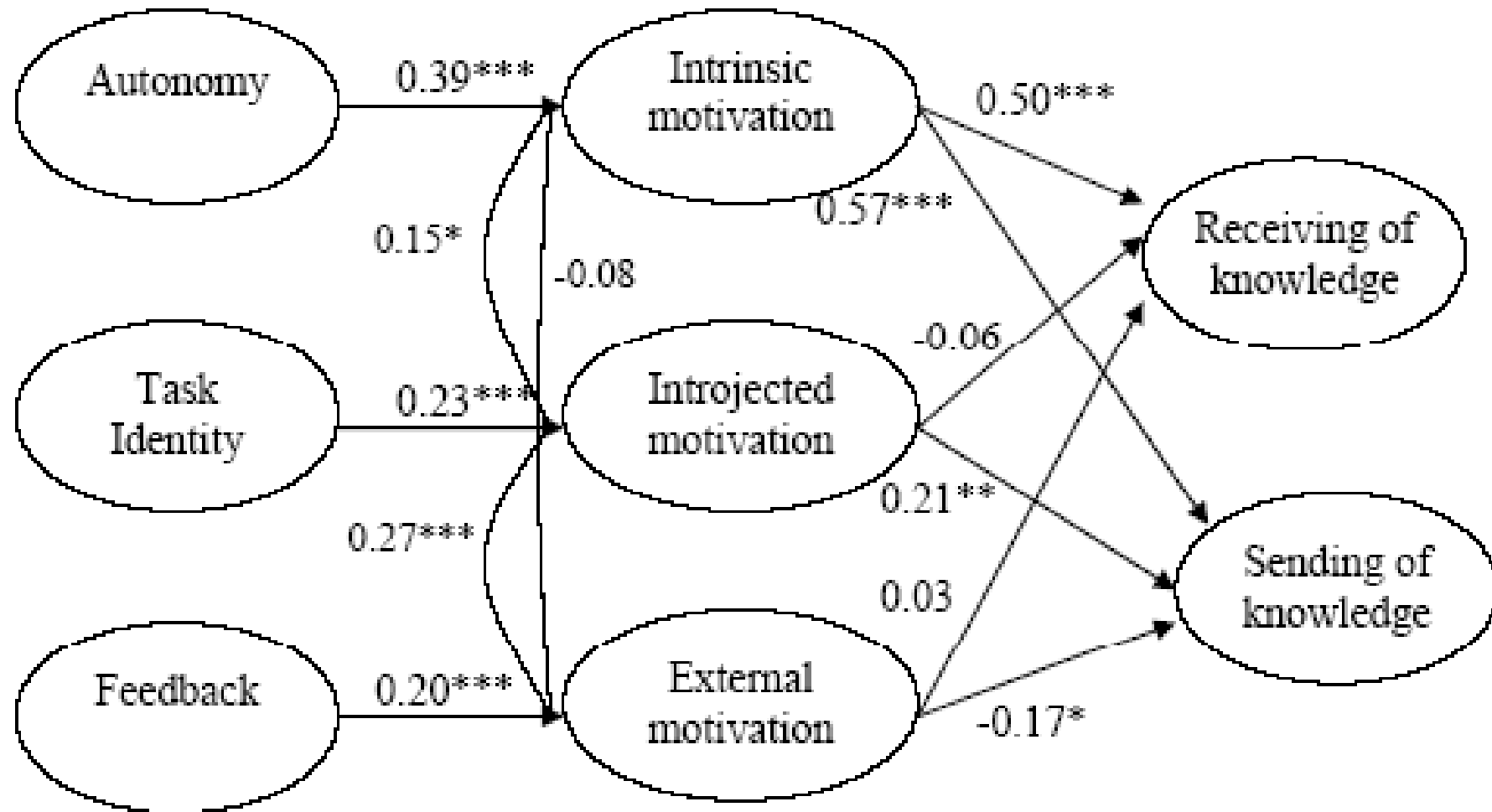
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- ▶ **One-site sampling, multiple respondents**
  - ▶ MAN Diesel Copenhagen
    - ▶ a typical engineering company employing mainly machine engineers and other engineers (e.g. in Electronics and IT) with an academic degree.
    - ▶ organizational structure is hierarchical, strongly departmentalized, and with clear lines of responsibility flowing from the top to the bottom
- ▶ **Questionnaire**
  - ▶ self-reported or perceptual measures
  - ▶ a web-based version
- ▶ **Responses**
  - ▶ 505 invitations, 263 questionnaires filled-in, 186 usable responses (response rate of 33 %)
- ▶ **Measures**
  - ▶ Table 2
  - ▶ Validity and reliability of measures



# Results

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## Concluding Remarks

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- ▶ Job autonomy increases employees' intrinsic motivation towards knowledge sharing;
- ▶ Task identity is positively linked to introjected motivation towards knowledge sharing;
- ▶ Feedback on the job has a positive impact on employees' external motivation to engage in knowledge sharing.

*Taken together these results provide strong evidence for the assertion that managers can design jobs in order to stimulate different types of motivation for knowledge sharing.*



## Concluding Remarks

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- ▶ The extent of knowledge sent to colleagues is affected by all three motivation types.
- ▶ The extent of knowledge received by the focal employee, however, is only significantly influenced by intrinsic motivation towards knowledge sharing, and, as expected, this effect is positive.

*The sending and the receiving of knowledge are two rather different two behaviors that have different underlying motivations.*



# Concluding Remarks

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*Grant (2007: 406) claims, "... declarations of the death of job design research may be premature"*

- ▶ Future studies should consider going beyond a rather narrow, limited set of job characteristics defined largely by Hackman and Oldham's model
  - ▶ E.g. include more social or interpersonal aspects of the job, e.g. to better reflect team-based aspects which is characterize many jobs today.
  - ▶ E.g. even more nuanced motivation types such as reciprocity and obligation-based motivation



## Limitations aside ...

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- ▶ The model developed and tested in this research provides some evidence and directions for research on the role of HRM practices in general, and job design in particular, in governing individual motivation to share knowledge.
- ▶ To further test this proposition a wider range of HRM practices need to be considered and more individual-level variables in addition to motivation (e.g. ability and opportunity, cf. Guest, 1997; Argote et al, 2003) should be introduced.

