
KNOWLEDGE DEFINITION AND TRANSFER BY TALENTED INTELLECTUAL WORKERS

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Abstract

The study deals with the processes of the knowledge and talent management realizing in organization. It explores how knowledge and talent is connected by SMEs (from tertiary sector), when searching for the best intellectual manpower. The primary purpose of the study is to survey the processes of knowledge of talented intellectual staff within the organization. In this study we will outline the first and the fifth steps (knowledge definition and knowledge transfer) Probst's theoretical model. The base of the study is a set of secondary and primary sources.

Key words: *knowledge management system, talented intellectual worker, knowledge goals, knowledge transfer*

JEL Classification: M12, M53, M54

Introduction

In recent decades human capital, knowledge and talent were increasingly appreciated, and had become strategic factors of the competitive market.

Talent is elusive phenomenon. We can find it everywhere but we cannot catch it. Employers are increasingly looking for specific skill groups, and also the existence of values that contribute to and promote the organization's progress. Talent management starts there, where the benefits of having the talent, the expense and risk of its loss are acknowledged.

In Slovakian practice the largest companies deal with the implementation of talent management practices, which is closely related to the functioning of knowledge management elements. Because it provides the opportunity to identify, care, support talents, and preserve, transfer their knowledge.

In this study the relationship between knowledge and talent in the knowledge management system were examined both theoretical and practical sides.

We will introduce the findings of our research which was held between April and May 2014. Our primary goal was to survey the processes of knowledge of talented intellectual staff within the organization. The research was mainly carried out in Trnava and Nitra counties from Slovakia regardless of their activity, functional form, or their size. In this survey we used Probst's theoretical model. The questions closely followed the logic of this model. In this study we will outline the first and the fifth steps.

Appriciation and management of knowledge

We live in the age of knowledge and information society where no company is able to self-organize and maintain itself without the proper knowledge (Davenport & Prusak, 2001), which is in constant motion between the organizations.

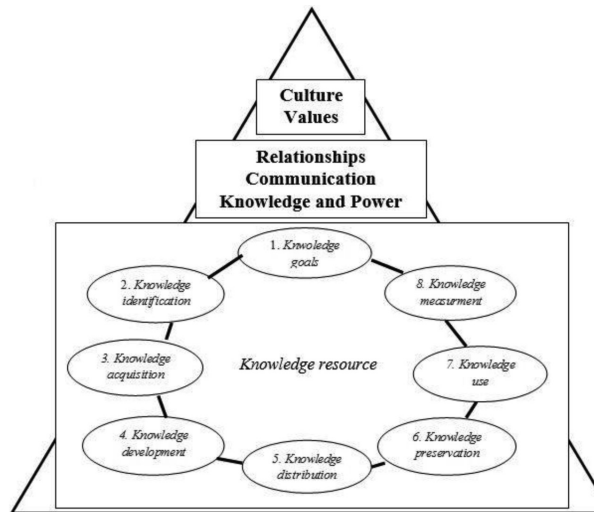
Knowledge is also an unique resource, which is based on our experiences. If we do not use it, it will wear off. (Bencsik, 2009) As Polányi said (1967) knowledge can be expressed as a system of practical and intellectual activities. In this process we could modify our own methods based on patterns by others. We can differentiate two types of knowledge: explicit knowledge is formalisable, easy to transfer, tacit knowledge is hard to codify or share. Tacit knowledge is taking place in the brain of a person. (Hildreth & Kimble, 2002) It is difficult to store it in written form. (Poór, 2009)

Knowledge management is nothing more than the management of collective knowledge held by its members in an integrated manner. It contains knowledge and activity of the individuals, which can be transformed in order to serve the organizational knowledge. (Martensson, 2000) To handle knowledge management systems it is obligatory to build learning organizational culture, where the most important value is knowledge and its conscious development. In learning organization culture we form our strategy with the mobilization of tacit knowledge. A company, which can react flexible on the changes, which can acquire new knowledge fast, will be more effective in the area of innovations too. (Bencsik, 2015)

To have a learning organizational culture and design a knowledge management system change management is needed. We need also a cultural background in which we could pay attention to the topics of trust, people, IT, structure. Trust is the foundation of all social relationships. In the absence of trust the members of the organization aloof from each other. (Bencsik, 2013) The human factor appears as a critical success factor of knowledge management system. (Moteleb & Woodman, 2007) Finally, it is necessary to examine the structure (management style and knowledge communities), which provides the operational framework for the change. (Bencsik, 2013)

A learning organization owns the following five principles: systems thinking, self-control, mental models, team learning and building shared vision. These five disciplines are pillars of learning organizations. (Senge, 1998) It is necessary to emphasize that an organization without knowledge based culture are not able to operate a knowledge management system. (Moteleb & Woodman, 2007) As seen on Chart 1 knowledge management has eight basic elements, but we have to examine them as a whole system. (Bencsik, 2013)

Chart 1 Concept of the Knowledge management system



Source: Farkas, 2005, own edition

In this study we would like to deal with the first, the fifth steps. Before the process we define the concept of intellectual workers.

Relationship between talent and talent management

The definition of talent must be approached from a psychological and an economical aspect as well.

The psychological interpretation of talent

The notion of talent has changed from time to time, depending on how the social and cultural needs of a given time have changed. Although we can not give a general definition, researchers agree that it contains an „inner force” that may provide the possibility of increasing social performance. (Gyarmathy, 2006)

We are talking about such a mentality and behavior that can lead us to new paths, solutions and realms. In our research Czeizel’s 4*2+1 factor talentum model will be considered as one of our corner stones. Czeizel considers the 4*2 elements, the four genetic talents, (heredity as a general intelligence talent, specific mental talents, creativity talent, motivational talent, as well as the four environmental factors, like family, school, contemporary groups, general social environment) as a source of emergence of talent. The listed create a complex mixture, because all of them can be positive, and negative too. The last „+1” factor of Czeizel model is formed by the so-called fate factor, which wants to emphasize that in the development of talent, fate and random has a large role. However, it is true that when researchers create talent concepts, they mostly forget about this. (Czeizel, 1997)

Interpretation of talent in economic processes

Talent management or talent nursing became strategically important in the 20th century, in the life of organizations. Its basic task is to forecast human resource needs and to plan the service of needs. Talent management can not be characterized as self-serving action, since its essence is not to improve employees, or to create incidental succession plans, but to ensure the reachability of the organizations' general aims, with which every organizations survival, and everyday actions can be easier or more transparent. (Cappelli, 2008) From economical aspect talent can be widely interpreted, but basically we focus on economically exploitable skills.

Relationship between knowledge and talent in knowledge management system

We will try to shed light on the more and more dominant relationship between existing knowledge and talent.

The notion of talent and targets of talent specifications

First step is defining *the notion of talent and targets of talent specifications*. This step is very important, but mostly rarely realized as conscious process. At this stage we should focus on the conditions which can be easily indicated in the job ads, what kind of knowledge is needed from the prospective employee. However, if organizations consciously focus on the objective of knowledge and talent, their determination will happen as a result of the strategic planning, rather than an ad-hoc basis. (Bencsik, 2013) To implement this stage successfully in terms of talent management, not only the priorities and objectives of knowledge are needed, but the interpretation of talents in the organization too.

During our examinations we have met so many talents definition, we think there are no good or bad concepts. It depends on the organization. Every company has to define their own concept, who will be a talent or expert of what kind of job? what abilities and skills or plus endowment are needed to list them in „above average“ categories. Without it, the attraction of talents to the organization is pointless and unsuccessful attempts.

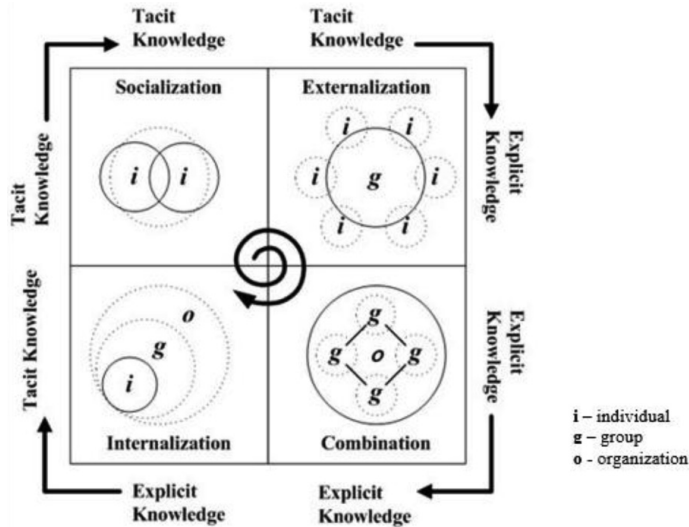
The knowledge sharing of talented intellectual workers

Anyone who has dabbled in the concept of knowledge management or began to build a system, has an experience about the significant barriers of knowledge sharing. The process of knowledge sharing can be either a one- or two-way process, while it can be realized between the individuals and groups. (Argote & Ingram, 2000) One barrier is the behavior and attitudes of people regarding the implications of knowledge sharing, the other barrier is the problems of transferring the tacit (elusive) part of the knowledge.

Another part of the problem is that the vast majority of corporate initiatives for sharing knowledge prefer primarily the sharing of explicit part of knowledge which can be communicated. They are not aware that this does not resolve the problems of knowledge transfer within the company. In fact, a much larger problem, and we might

say insurmountable challenge is acquiring, brokering the knowledge which is not formulated in words, hard to explain. If we call for help the well-known SECI model (Nonaka & Toyama, 2003) it can be seen (Chart 2) that the convertation of types of knowledge (explicit - tacit) creates an endless spiral, which has a peak in the infinity.

Chart 2 SECI model



Source: Nonaka - Toyama (2003)

So it will never be allowed to broadcast our full knowledge even the initiatives will be the most opened and well-intentioned.

Practical examination

In this study we will examine the intellectual workers. In 1958 Peter Drucker used the term of intellectual worker at first. There are many definitions for the notion of intellectual/knowledge workers, but in our opinion none of them is the perfect definition for our research. Therefore, at the beginning of our research then our questionnaire we definied 2 most important notions (partly based on the literature):

- „intellectual/knowledge workers (IW/KW) are employees who are responsible for doing spiritual office and non-office and other complex tasks (including planning, organization, management, decision-making). These individuals do not meet the mechanical routine tasks. The tool for intellectual workers is their knowledge, not the physical matter.” (Rácz & Bencsik & Stifter, 2014, p.9.)
- „talented/above average intellectual workers (TIW/AAIW) are experts who perform mental tasks with good or outstanding performance and own ability to quality work. They are the human driving forces of development, competitive advantages and innovations in organizations.” (Rácz & Bencsik & Stifter, 2014, p.9.)

To test our assumptions, *quantitative research* was carried out among different organizations using a structured questionnaire. One person filled out the questionnaire from each organization. We primarily asked managers, but in some cases the competent employee filled out the questionnaire instead of the leader, who was chosen by his/her leader.

We used mostly closed questions in our questionnaire; the respondents selected their most representative choice from predefined options. So the results are reliable, easier to code, analyse with SPSS statistical analysis tool. It shows that the independent variables are related to another variable. Later we examined that the type of organizations may explain the received replies. We used simple random sampling, so each organization had the same probability of being chosen for the sample. *The sample* includes 147 organizations from Trnava and Nitra counties (Slovakia). 87 organizations are from tertiary sector (63 as SMEs, 17 as public institutions, 6 as large and 1 as multinational companies).

In respect of employees 95,2% of SMEs have less than 50 employees, that means only 3 SMEs have more than 50 employees. Our research was not representative, since it does not follow the distribution of organizations. Due to limits of the study we will show just a few interesting results of our research.

Based on the literature which we could analyze 2 research questions:

- **RQ 1:** Is the differentiation of talented intellectual workers (TIW) and average intellectual workers (AIW) observable among the questioned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)? If the answer is yes, how?
- **RQ 2:** Is the sharing of knowledge detectable? If the answer is yes, how does it emerge by TIW?

We have summarised the activities of 63 supplier SMEs according to resource demand (3 basic) in this research (Table 1).

Table 1 Resource requirements of respondent SMEs

	very low	low	average	high	very high
Capital requirements	4,8	11,1	57,1	23,8	3,2
Labor requirements	0	4,8	39,7	44,4	11,1
Knowledge requirements	0	4,8	39,7	41,3	14,3

Source: own research, own edition

Only 44,5% of respondents (20 leaders and 8 employees) said that their organization had declared and elaborated company strategy. However it is worrying that 19% of them (6 leaders and 6 employees) couldn't answer yes or no this question, although up to 67% have worked more than 5,29% of them have worked for 1-4 years for the company. Besides this, the respondents took part in the research on the following distribution regarding the position (Table 2).

Table 2 Relation between organizational level and position (%)

	Employee ($\Sigma=20$ fő)	Leader ($\Sigma=43$ fő)
Operational	55	4,7
Tactical	25	37,2
Strategic	20	58,1
Σ	100	100

Source: own research, own edition

We have also formulated a few basic questions on talent management activities of the asked companies. Only 17,5% of them (11 companies) have a consciously built up talent management system. Each of them believes this system aligned with the company strategy. More than 60% of them think that it focuses on higher positions.

We analyzed how did the respondents define the so called above average intellectual workers (TIW) of the organization. We listed some elements of outstanding workers (Table 3) and asked the respondents to check whether elements are used or not in their organization to characterize them.

Table 3 Elements of talented intellectual workers (%)

Elements	SMEs
High IQ	20,6
Outstanding academic expertise in related field	58,7
Outstanding experience in related field	50,8
Outstanding long-term performance in related field	36,5
Desire for learning	30,2
Creativity	54,0
Internal motivation	22,2
Good problem solving ability	50,8
Innovative personality / attitude	34,9

Source: our research, our edition

As we can see the respondents most preferred the good theoretical and practical knowledge, good problem solving ability, creativity and innovativity. This result shows (as well) that the notion of talent (by respondents) is not equal with the notion of high IQ.

RQ 1: Is the differentiation of TIW and AIW observable among the questioned SMEs? If the answer is yes, how?

Only 42,8% of the questioned SMEs (27 respondents) support the differentiation of TIWs and AIWs in the organization. We have searched the possible reasons. At first, the high cost and long timing of the process has risen up (with more than 70-70%). At second, the reasons were the mistrust and the fear of the effects. It is due to the fact that more than 70% of the respondents believe that differentiation of two employee-group would lead to reduction of cooperation.

The surveying adverted to whether the companies think the assessment process of the talented professionals based on objective criterias or subjective opinions. The answers did not show to high deviation. Only 15% of respondents think the TIWs assessed on the subjective opinion of the leader.

The everyday differentiation is fewer (only 30,2%). This routine has been detected in 48-48% in both leadership levels (higher and lower). Besides 84% of them think that the idea of talent existed in the company's policy and mostly declared according to position ratings.

84-85% of differentiation-supporting companies believes that the differentiation of the two employee- group

- is a payback process,
- causes material
- and non-material benefits for the company in short term.

We can say that although 11 SMEs run conscious talent management system (among the respondents), 16 further company shows initiatives on this activity, particularly on higher employee ratings.

RQ 2: Is the sharing of knowledge detectable? If the answer is yes, how does it emergence by TIW?

We have touched upon in the theoretic background that the sharing of knowledge had needed an opened organisational culture and a higher level of trust. Almost every SMEs of the respondents (except 4) typified their companies as an open organization, where the spontaneous collaboration between employees were common (92,1%), and the workers trusted each other.

More than 95% of the SMEs think, that the employees shared their experiences and knowledge with pleasure for example during a conning process.

Although more than 89% of the differentiation-supporting SMEs think, that the TIWs focused primarily on sharing their experiences and not the theoretical knowledge.

As well as 68% of them think that the talented professionals less try for sharing their knowledge than the common professionals.

This survey doesn't touch upon the further applied tools and methods of knowledge sharing.

Conclusion

The demand for highly skilled and talented individuals in both developed and developing countries is growing, while the unemployment rate has not decreased. Also increasing competition can be observed in attracting talented people that encourages them to more rational management, rational exploitation of resources. Over the years, in the company's thinking and efficiency those terms have been the focus such as information, knowledge, knowledge transfer, networking, talent, innovation. It can be observed that, next to the so called hard factors, soft factors (for example communication, team spirit, or the issues of motivation) has get a more and more importance in management researches.

As a result of our survey, based on the questionnaire we could say the followings:

- for the responding organizations it is partly true that the concept of intellectual talent and talented employees are integral parts of organizational thinking,
- for SMEs is not so important the presence of talent and manage of their knowledge,

- the examined organizations prefer external knowledge sources than internal sources in case of intellectual workers.

There are some *limitations of our research*. First, the lack of database, which can be a basis of those organizations who deal with knowledge and talent management in their daily activities. We were unable to define the basic population without adequate data. We have tried to reach out and motivate a lot of organizations to the participation, but because of the low propensity our research are not representative.

In our future plans we would like to continue our analyzing process in the case of other knowledge management steps. We will encourage more organizations to participate and perform deeper analysis on the common points of knowledge and talent management.

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