Anna PIETRUSZKA-ORTYL
Cracow University of Economics
Faculty of Management
Department of Organizational Behaviour

MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CONTEXT MANAGEMENT OF PROFESSIONALS

Summary. Professionals are those employees, that in terms of knowledge creation strategy and knowledge transfer strategy, are the most precious organizational players. In this context special significance has multicultural dimension of knowledge workers cooperation, that defines not only their openness to knowledge sharing but also it's effectiveness. Culture forms mental models and affects other determinants of tacit knowledge creation process, as an example level and type of trust.

Keywords: knowledge workers, knowledge sharing, trust, multiculturalism

WIELOKULTUROWOŚĆ W KONTEKŚCIE ZARZĄDZANIA PROFESJONALISTAMI

Streszczenie. Profesjonaliści to pracownicy organizacji, którzy, z punktu widzenia realizacji strategii tworzenia nowej wiedzy i transferu wiedzy, są najcenniejszymi jej graczami. W tym kontekście szczególne znaczenie ma wymiar wielokulturowy współdziałania pracowników wiedzy, który określa nie tylko ich otwartość do dzielenia się wiedzą, ale przede wszystkim jego efektywność. Kultura kształtuje modele mentalne specjalistów oraz wpływa na inne determinanty procesu kreowania wiedzy cichej, przykładowo poziom i rodzaj zaufania.

Słowa kluczowe: pracownicy wiedzy, dzielenie się wiedzą, zaufanie, wielo-kulturowość

1. Introduction

At present, we can observe a considerable change in the principles of organisation management to be in progress – the potential winners of the market game of the new economy may be found among organisations of the *knowledge intensive companies* variety. However, the thing that makes an enterprise a knowledge-based one is non-codified, highly personalised, silent knowledge.

From the perspective of an organisation, disregarding the conditions for their implementation, among the most beneficial strategies of knowledge management are those based on creating new knowledge and transferring it. It is possible to use those strategies only when the work for the benefit of an organisation is done by creative and open individuals – willing to exchange their own tacit knowledge.

Such attributes and approaches most often characterize intellectual workers – high-class specialists, perceived as a new generation of professionals – knowledge workers of the new century. Therefore, nowadays organisations aspiring to the position of knowledge-based companies often strive to analyse and diagnose the factors affecting their openness with regard to sharing knowledge among professionals. The willingness of employees to exchange knowledge is reflected not only in the development of latent knowledge or its transfer, but also in creation of organisational knowledge in each of its forms, also codified and well established. This is important, as these are the forms in which knowledge is fully owned by an organisation and may be controlled by it.

To sum up, while technology may support storing open knowledge, quiet knowledge resides only in human minds and its availability and the possibilities of using depend only on individual decisions and the relations of its holders[1]. This most precious knowledge is usually hidden in the possession of key employees – professionals, and the organization's pursuit to obtain it may be only related to stimulating the openness to share it. Sharing secret knowledge is so critical for a contemporary company due to its complex nature and the difficulty in implementation – taking into account only the mobility of work and its virtualization eliminating frequent personal contacts, low employee loyalty or their high fluctuation of employment[2].

---

[1] Holste J.S., Fields D.: Trust and tacit knowledge sharing use. „Journal of Knowledge Management", Vol. 14, No. 1, 2010, p. 128.

[2] Mayfield M.: Tacit knowledge sharing: techniques for putting a powerful tool in practice. „Development and Learning in Organizations", Vol. 24, No. 1, 2010, p. 24.

The holders and the only carriers of quiet knowledge are employees – therefore, it covers all information which units having it can use[3]. Therefore, the transfer of this knowledge between people is slow and costly. It proceeds through face to face contacts and a significant impediment in proper interpretation of knowledge obtained by the recipient constitutes its ambiguity. The elimination of interpretation errors may be made only by immediate feedback[4]. Therefore, particular importance is gained by the multicultural context in which professionals operate as one of the basic factors conditioning knowledge management in their communities. There is no other formation in which the more expressly role of mental models or cultural values and patterns in the implementation of sub-processes of creation and transfer of knowledge is more significantly distinguished.

This is specific population. In a critical way the success of the parent organization depends on the integration between organizational knowledge management strategy and individual knowledge worker's knowledge management strategy. The efficiency of sub-processes of knowledge sharing and its codification in perspective of professionals and the organization as a whole, is set in the most peculiar system of motivation and organizational culture of knowledge-based enterprise[5].

Hence, the purpose of the study is to present selected aspects of managing knowledge employees with particular focus on sharing knowledge as well as to present its conditions in a multicultural aspect.

2. From the knowledge protection strategy to the knowledge dissemination strategy

Employees who do not share knowledge represent a one-sided, highly individualised perspective of perception of an organisation and perception of their professional career. The main error in this respect is failure to notice the expanding capabilities of employees who intentionally dose their confidential knowledge. Furthermore, original silent knowledge requires to be additionally processed by the employees (externalisation), which, in turn, increases the knowledge resources of an enterprise (the synergy effect). Knowledge that is not

---

[3] Gamble P.R., Blackwell J.: Knowledge Management. A State of the Art Guide. Kogan Page, London 2001, p. 126.

[4] Teece D.J.: Managing Intellectual Capital. Organizational, Strategic and Policy Dimensions. Oxford University Press, New York 2000, p. 13.

[5] For more details see: Gruszczyńska-Malec G., Rutkowska M.: Strategies of knowledge management. Theoretic and practical models. Polish Economic Publishing House, Warsaw 2013, p. 82-84.

applied is subject to a rapid process of ageing. Therefore, sharing knowledge is almost a life necessity of each operating entity[6].

Professionals, as employees with a high level of awareness of the conditions of operation in a knowledge-based economy, they are distant from the concept of one-way knowledge sharing. The perspective that they tend to assume most often is the network perspective, according to which sharing knowledge is perceived as a growth in possibilities. Achieving success outside the network is virtually impossible, since the processes which are dominant these days are chaotic, multi-directional and often contradictory, because of which a logic of rational, well thought-out conduct cannot be applied. Currently, the diffusion of knowledge and information in fragmented, asymmetric network structures proceeds more and more rapidly, even following a geometrical progress (Fig. 1)[7].
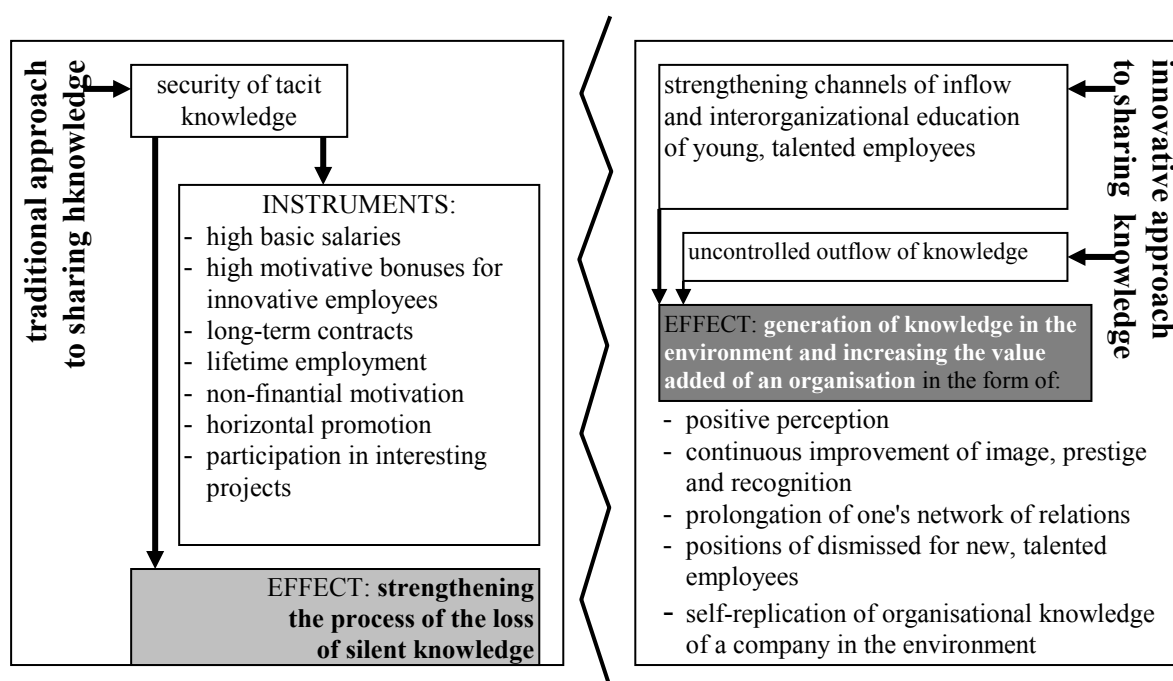

Fig. 1. Traditional and innovative perspective in the aspect of sharing knowledge of an organisation
Rys. 1. Tradycyjna a nowatorska perspektywa w aspekcie dzielenia się wiedzą organizacji
Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of: Perechuda K.: Knowledge workers as the creators
         of network potentials. „Human Resources Management”, No. 5, 2005, p. 12-13.

---

[6] Perechuda K.: Knowledge workers as the creators of network potentials. „Human Resources Management”, No. 5, 2005, p. 13-14.
[7] Ibidem, p. 14.

The attributes of the network perspective in knowledge sharing include[8]:

- virtual teams (flows of knowledge and information as a basic condition of their existence),
- fractal approach (even the tiniest link in the network is equivalent to the whole and every other sub-segment),
- network synergy (knowledge is subject to the process of self-replication in the network).

This context perfectly fits within the issues of multiculturalism. Circulation of knowledge in network structures characterised by a multiplicity of cultures generates specific problems in the form of different mental models, communication styles or principles of building trust. At the same time, it constitute an immanent characteristic of knowledge-based work and is a factor stimulating the creation of new knowledge by developing mental models, new or typical of a given community of professionals, affecting the functioning of an intellectual word of mouth or being the basis for extreme loyalty to the community with which they identify themselves and to which they belong.

According to the analysis of G. Schrank, intellectual workers therefore expect a very different environment – multiple application tasks, constant communication with other units with equally far-reaching competencies. This band full of determination, awaiting permanent access to information, functioning in a social network and technology at the same time. Parent need to be able to act with the "tools of management in the cloud"[9].

Therefore, specialists operate in networks, listing them, at the same time, as a basic element shaping their working environment and emphasising the crucial role of relational capital, because they become fully aware of their specific qualities. Network structures provide extremely dynamic stepwise – quality growths in knowledge.

3. Multiculturalism and effectiveness of knowledge sharing among specialists

An important issue examined within the issues of knowledge management is the dynamics and mutual connections between the processes affecting the generation of organisational knowledge which comprise the cycle of knowledge management, including, but not limited to, its transfer and sharing. A particularly valuable issue is the research aimed at determining the essence of particular sub-processes, especially the research focusing on the factors conditioning the acquisition of new knowledge.

---

[8] Ibidem.
[9] Schrank G.: Sayonara Cubicles: The Knowledge Worker Revolution is Here. „Information Management", February 2013, p. 1-2.

An important element influencing the acquisition of knowledge the is organisational culture. Modern IT may only be a tool supporting the transfer of knowledge, while shaping a proper organisational culture, shared values, understanding and identification with the objectives of an enterprise, a fundamental change in the awareness, attitudes and behaviours of managers are a true key to success. On the other hand, proper understanding of trust-based relations, providing the basis for the assumptions of an organisational culture supporting the acquisition and sharing of knowledge, requires honesty of managers, respect for employees, appreciation for the gravity and the importance of their knowledge. In addition, it becomes necessary to gain acceptance and commitment of employees in the processes of organisational learning, motivation to share knowledge[10].

The analysis of C. Leeson confirm that, one of the most important components of a successful knowledge management strategy is its ability to promote and support a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing. Tools, processes and organizational constructs are important elements. Culture is the lynchpin that will determine the willingness of employees to participate, to demonstrate the behaviors and to adopt the tools and processes of a highly collaborative organization. It's also the most difficult part of the equation to get right[11].

A particular cycle of generation of community knowledge has been presented by M. Kodama. Its essence is the assumption that the existing knowledge possessed by every member is divided within the community. Mutual inspiration and dissemination of the attitude of openness in knowledge sharing lead to generation of new community knowledge, which is accumulated within an organisation[12]. The important thing within this process is that knowledge generated in this way may be treated in categories of the structural capital of an enterprise (depending on who is the member the community, it can be a customer capital, when the members of the community are individuals from outside the organisation or an organisational capital, when the members act within the boundaries of their organisational affiliation).

The cycle itself consists of four basic stages in which the plane of interaction are networks of relations with particular stakeholders of an organisation (both employees as well as other entities operating for its benefit, especially the distinguishing customers), fits directly within the multicultural conditions of circulation of knowledge.

---

[10] Walczak W.: Knowledge management in enterprise. „Economics and Organization of Enterprise", No. 12, 2009, p. 6-9.

[11] Leeson C.: Driving KM behaviors and adoption through gamification. „KM World: Content, Document and Knowledge Management", March 2013, p. 1.

[12] Kodama M.: Innovation Networks in Knowledge-based Firms. Developing ICT-based Integrative Competences. Edward Elgar Publishing, Bodmin 2009, p. 236-237.

As part of the cycle of generation of community knowledge, M. Kodama identifies the following elements in the form of sub-processes[13]:

1. Knowledge sharing, consisting in recovery and finding and then transferring and explanation of knowledge possessed by particular members of the community within the community.

2. Inspiration, intended to disseminate knowledge by evoking the resources of the existing knowledge and discovering knowledge as the result of empirical learning (improvisational learning during the implementation).

3. Generation of knowledge as creation of new knowledge as a result of inspiration, that is integration of the knowledge possessed so far with the knowledge generated at the previous stage.

4. Accumulation in the form of collection of diverse, new knowledge originating as a consequence of inspiration, propagation and generation.

The cycle of generation of community knowledge characterised by the author coexists while being interdependent on the integration of knowledge that, in the opinion of M. Kodama, proceeds in three planes or phases of "interception" – at the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic level.

According to the mentioned concept of integration of knowledge, there are three levels in the interpretation and acquisition knowledge between employees. The results of internalisation of knowledge at each of these levels result in exceeding each of the planes one by one, starting from the syntactic level aspect, through the semantic level up to the pragmatic level[14].

The activity in conveying silent knowledge in the form of simple daily routines applies to the phase of interception at the syntactic level. Accumulation of knowledge at this level constitutes the basis for organisational activities and serves as the catalyst of the development of and generation of new knowledge by bringing the absorption of knowledge to a new dimension – the semantic level.

The basis for integration of knowledge in the semantic dimension is organisational learning done by using the best practices. Their source is propagation and acquisition of knowledge gathered during the syntactic phase. It provides the basis for generation of silent knowledge in its operational and conceptual form being the basis for advanced generation. At this time, the knowledge possessed so far gains new applications and specific meaning for a particular organisation and a specified team. Therefore, it is very important to use identically interpreted analogies, metaphors or mental models at this level so as not to leave the possibility to interpret the generated knowledge in a different way, in the aspect of

---

[13] Ibidem, 236, 262.
[14] See: Ibidem, p. 256-258.

multiculturalism. This action essentially enriches the resources of the silent knowledge possessed so far, since it provides new elements in the form of a different perspective and new interpretations.

The level of pragmatic interception is intended to generate new knowledge in a well-established form (reflected in specific organisational solutions, new products or services). It is a derivative of a rich diversity of experience and basic knowledge of employees and the conditions in which it has been interpreted and processed again – since mental models common and typical of the participants of the process of integration of silent knowledge are developed in the semantic phase. In turn, at the scale of the entire enterprise the process itself may lead to a significant organisational change, particularly when it is underway in a group of professionals.

4. Specific character of knowledge exchange process in a group of intellectual workers

Sharing hidden knowledge is the first and the basic stage of the Japanese five-stage model of the process of organisational creation of knowledge[15]. This is the time when individual tacit knowledge is disseminated, which approximately corresponds to the process of socialisation, providing the base for transfer and future generation of organisational knowledge. Sharing knowledge in any form is thus an important factor in generation of competitive advantage based on intangible resources. With regard to employees holding critical competences – specialists, its effectiveness seems to have a significant impact on the increase in the value of an enterprise, since it applies to the population of the employed, the attribute of which is, above all, creation of value added on the basis of their activities – knowledge-based work.

Therefore, knowledge sharing is a process based on mutual transfer of personalised public and silent knowledge. This may happen through the process of communication or take place during mutual cooperation involving a direct contact associated with dialogue or by observation, or cooperation resulting in common experiences.

In the case of professionals knowledge sharing receives a special dimension, since it usually applies to specialist, specific and contextual knowledge, mostly in the silent form. Therefore, in terms of this subpopulation of employees, the Japanese approach to perception of knowledge, according to which it is carried only by people and it is shared through conversion, becomes natural. Based on the SECI process we can indicate those elements –

---

[15] For more details see: Nonaka I., Takeuchi H.: The Knowledge-Creating Company. How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation. Poltext, Warsaw 2000, p. 110-116.

sub-processes of it that are the most typical of professionals – socialisation and externalisation as well as link particular stages of the SECI process with the levels knowledge is shared among knowledge employees (Fig. 2).
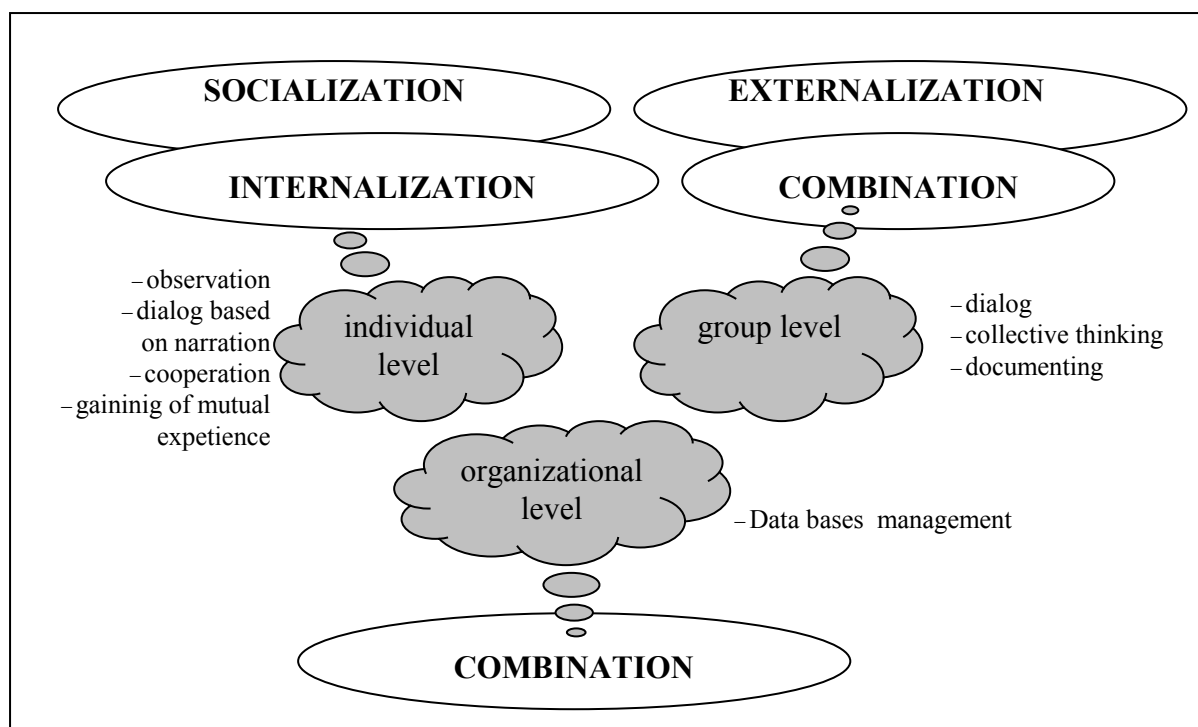

Fig. 2. Process SECI and levels of knowledge worker's behaviors in knowledge sharing
Rys. 2. Proces SECI i poziomy analizy zachowań w zakresie dzielenia się wiedzą przez profesjonalistów
Source: Prepared by the author.

Socialisation, especially difficult to implement in dispersed teams, where professionals work often, consisting in conversion of silent knowledge into silent knowledge, resulting in the emergence of mutually noticeable knowledge, is a process sharing experiences, acquiring hidden knowledge in the form of mental models and technical skills directly from others, without using the language. Therefore, it is the basic level where knowledge is shared among specialists, especially at the individual level by way of observation or dialogue based on narration.

Externalisation, as conversion of silent knowledge into public knowledge, that is conversion of knowledge by means of available notions, is similar. As a result, notional knowledge appears and is made available in the form of metaphors, analogies, notions, hypotheses or models. Externalisation means, therefore, the participation of knowledge

employees. It is fostered by dialogue as well as collective thinking and may constitute a sub-process supporting sharing knowledge between professionals at the individual and team level.

On the other hand, combination is conversion of public knowledge into public knowledge, resulting in generation of knowledge systematised by ordering and incorporation of concepts in a specific system of knowledge using documents, meetings, conversations and computer networks. It is connected more closely to the formalisation of knowledge of specialists, applies to the team level, and in the primary extent the organisational level.

Internalisation applies to conversion of public knowledge into silent knowledge, thanks to which operating knowledge is generated. Associated with learning by means of action, it is placed at the individual as well as the team level of knowledge sharing, because most often it takes place during cooperation between the parties in which both gain experience.

E.Z. Taylor and U.S. Murthy have adapted the model of knowledge sharing proposed by M.M. Wasko and S. Faraj to peculiar conditions of a virtual community of activities of professionals (Fig. 3). They determine knowledge sharing as a process leading individuals towards thinking or using their own knowledge to help others in transformation of their own knowledge resources to solve problems resulting from specific circumstances[16]. The authors of the concept identify two groups of factors affecting the frequency with which knowledge is shared between office workers and enumerate relevant components within each of them.
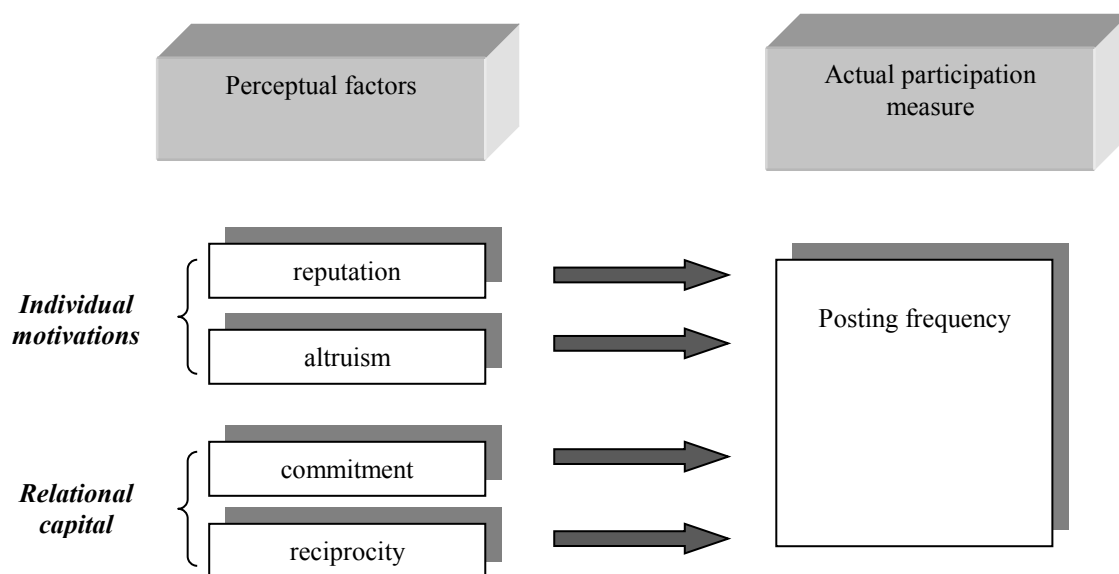

Fig. 3. Model of knowledge sharing
Rys. 3. Model dzielenia się wiedzą wśród pracowników intelektualnych
Source: Taylor E.Z., Murthy U.S.: Knowledge Sharing among Accounting Academics in an Electronic Network of Practice. „Accounting Horizons”, Vol. 23, No. 2, 2009, p. 155.

---

[16] Taylor E.Z., Murthy U.S.: Knowledge Sharing among Accounting Academics in an Electronic Network of Practice. „Accounting Horizons”, Vol. 23, No. 2, 2009, p. 154.

In the proposed model of knowledge sharing they define perception factors in the form of individual motivation determined by reputation and altruism as well as relational capital as a resultant of obligations and reciprocity. The distinguished elements determine the openness to share knowledge measured by the frequency of posted messages and participation in discussions.

Individual motivation is shaped by reputation and altruism. The authors characterise reputation as a set of features or capacities recognised by the environment. Using the theory of social exchange, they argue that specialists engage in social behaviour not just for specific material benefits but also for intangible benefits in the form of satisfaction of such needs as acceptance and prestige as well as identification, status and recognition. At the same time, they emphasise that in a situation where professionals treat an individual as an active and involved member of a specific specialist group, positive reputation of this group is transferred onto this individual – hence, the aim of office workers to be members of prestigious formations.

Altruism characterised as a getting satisfaction from providing assistance affects knowledge sharing to a significant extent, both focusing on the amount and the quality of distributed knowledge[17].

Relational capital, including obligation (sense of duty) and reciprocity is the level of trust and respect held between the members of a given formation. Group membership motivates members to provide mutual support during the pursuit of common goals. Therefore, an obligation is associated with a sense of duty to help others together, just because of the affiliation to the same community.

Reciprocity, as the second component of relational capital, is a belief that every member should help others and, in turn, may expect the same attitude on the basis of returning or giving a favour[18].

It is also worth emphasising that knowledge sharing is naturally a voluntary and often spontaneous process, it is difficult to place it in the description of duties required from an employee and very hard to award it precisely, due to the intangible and non-measurable nature of this action. This resultant of individual interrelations between individuals, on the grounds of which lies mutual congruence, matching personalities, competencies and the task at hand as well as dependencies of an individual towards the organization depending on the degree of commitment to the company and the range of participation of in decision-making[19].

---

[17] Ibidem, p. 155-156.
[18] Ibidem, p. 157.
[19] Lin C-P.: To share or not to share: modeling knowledge sparing using exchange ideology as a moderator. „Personnel Review", Vol. 36 No. 3, 2007, p. 458.

As a consequence, we can speak of controlled knowledge sharing under the influence of the management only at the organisational level. At the level of individual and team knowledge sharing, the only thing that should be examined is shaping a relevant context stimulating openness in communication.

5. Trust in a multicultural environment of intellectual workers as a factor that determines knowledge sharing

The implementation of the process of sharing knowledge at the individual level is associated with exchanging knowledge by way of personal contacts and in the perspective of functioning in a social network which is perceived as a basic plane of knowledge circulation between professionals. Additional emphasis is put on the importance of trust, clearly indicating that specialists share their unique, valuable and most often silent knowledge only with the closest and most trusted employees.

The role of trust in organisational generation of knowledge has also been emphasised by H. Scarbrough and K. Amaeshi. They present a continuum of knowledge exchange and place it in the process of generation of knowledge established in the form of commercialisation of technology.

They link the role and the specific type of trust to the level of exchange of information. They take account of the following dimensions of trust[20]:
- – interpersonal trust determined by personality – the most dependent on culture; its level depends on innate and acquired personality traits of the individuals forming an organisation; ability to empathise with the situation of other people, sensitivity, responsibility and emotional restraint are some of the traits that determine high personal tendency to trust,
- – institutional trust resulting from commonly accepted and undisputed formal regulations, social standards and structures; consists in shaping a sense of safety on the basis of formal protections and all these elements determine the transparency and stability of the situation,
- – network trust, the essence and the guarantor of which is the social network in which individuals function; it consists in formal and informal as well as direct and indirect bonds between the participants based on the sense of a community, exceptionality and high loyalty, where affiliation is a sign of status.

---

[20] Scarbrough H., Amaeshi K.: Evaluation practices in the commercialization of early stage technology: the role of trust, [in:] Scarbrough H. (ed): The evolution of business knowledge. Oxford University Press, New York 2008, p. 225-226.

The authors stress the importance of trust, arguing it is important in the event of reduction of the costs of verification of acquired knowledge. Trust leads to higher openness in communication and knowledge sharing. It eliminates the need for assessment of the value of acquired knowledge, provides the basis for perception of knowledge exchange in the categories of sharing resources of similar value.

In virtual groups, frequent for office employees and usually in multicultural their case, building interpersonal trust proceeds differently (Fig. 4). Its participants are deprived of basic instruments of building trust by way of direct contacts in the form of a number of diverse signals, such as appearance, gestures, face expression and behaviour. Based on this, are not able to reasonably assess and calculate the parties (truster and confidant) with regard to the nature of newly created relations from the point of view of kindness, fairness, competences and predictability.
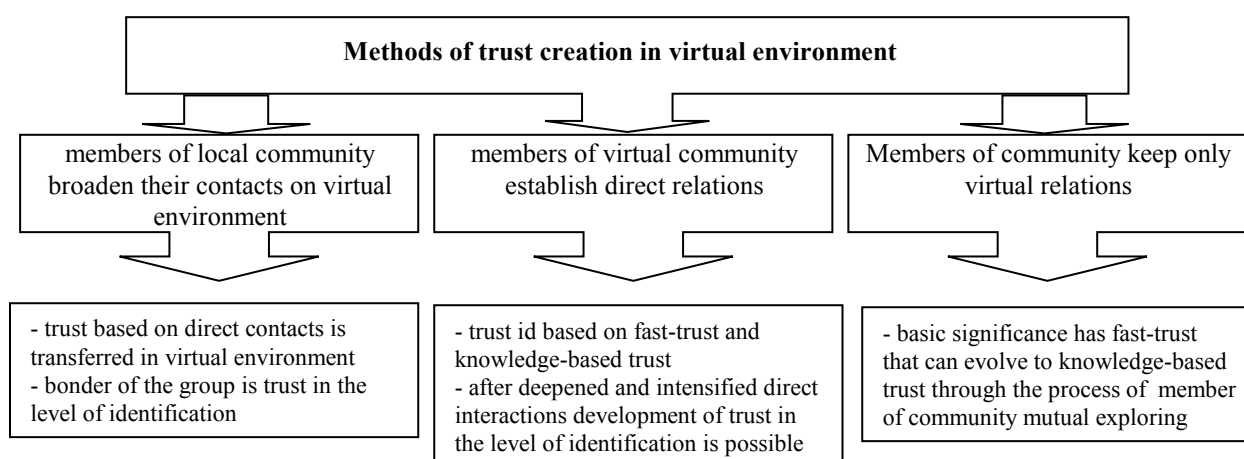

Fig. 4. Methods of trust creation in virtual environment
Rys. 4. Sposoby budowania zaufania w środowisku wirtualnym
Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of: Bendkowski J.: Conditions for development of trust in virtual environment, [in:] Human and work in a changing organisation. Management oriented on the employee interest. Research Papers of Wrocław University of Economics, No. 224, 2011, p. 86.

Cooperation in virtual space can be initiated as a result of the so-called quick trust, arising suddenly along with the beginning of implementation of a task and originating from the expert reputation held by the members of the team enjoyed by them since the beginning of the cooperation as well as natural human tendencies and the willingness to have trust in this

knowledge. Quick trust is regarded to be one of the most important kinds of trust, without which individuals would not be able to effectively establish new relations[21].

<div align="right">Table 1</div>

Dimensions of situational factors of quick trust in a virtual space of activities

dimension	factors	impact on the level of trust
organisational	- domain	- trust rises faster when a domain provides the members of a community with a certain value
	- way of emergence	- higher level of trust will appear in spontaneously formed communities or in a situation when the key members hold central positions in a trust network
	- environment	- the economic dimension, the organizational culture as well as the management style affect one another, creating an environment that may be support, have no effect on or adversely affect the processes of formation and development of quick trust
	- leadership	- in the event of constantly negotiated leadership the responsibility and the roles are subject to continuous negotiations and are divided as necessary, which involves a growth in trust
community	- size	- a large community means formation of social bonds and a decrease in trust
	- membership	- open membership and compulsory recruitment of new members involve to problem of people using the knowledge of the community while not contributing themselves
	- manner of recruitment of new members	
	- proficiency in using technology	- lack of it may result in exclusion of some members from the activities of the community or significantly hinder the establishment of closer bonds with them
	- cultural diversity	- too high may make it difficult for the members to identify and develop common interests as well as develop open communication, which will automatically decrease quick trust and disintegrate the community
technological transport	- degree of diversity and scope of use of information technologies	- have a direct, positive impact on the level of quick trust

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of Bendkowski J.: Conditions for development of trust in virtual environment, [in:] Human and work in a changing organisation. Management oriented on on the employee interest. Research Papers of Wrocław University of Economics, No. 224, 2011, p. 86-88.

Quick trust derives from the process of establishment of a group stratification, in which the leading role is played by the level of expectations with regard to the competences of an individual and its contribution to solution of group tasks. Therefore, an initially high level of trust observed with regard to virtual teams stems from a high level of expectations. Along with the development of interactions and acquisition of knowledge about other members the

---

[21] Bendkowski J.: Conditions for development of trust in virtual environment, [in:] Human and work in a changing organisation. Management oriented on on the employee interest. Research Papers of Wrocław University of Economics, No. 224, 2011, p. 84-85.

competencies attributed to individuals are subjected to a practical assessment, which in consequence makes the trust stronger or weaker. However, the levels of expectations do not depend solely on an individual's status, but also on the conditions in a given situation[22].

Quick trust is very unstable – it does not constitute sufficient grounds for development of a virtual community of actions and requires the emergence of certain situational factors depending on the premises in the organisational, community and technological dimensions (Tab. 1).

The organisational dimension includes any factors affecting the level of trust in a community of activities on which can be influenced by the organisation. The community dimension includes any premises at the community level that determine the processes of development of quick trust. The technological dimension includes any technical conditions associated with generation of trust in a virtual space of activities[23].

To sum up as well as referring to designing an environment supporting sharing of knowledge by specialists, an organisation should aim at providing relevant elements in three areas[24]:

- specific organizational working conditions, covering providing such comfort zones which, to the greatest extent, satisfy the needs and expectations of knowledge workers, especially in the category of equipment,
- communication network, fully formalized, placed in the organizational structure, supported by professional technical-technological solutions, stimulating the development of a social network and the creation and intensification of personal interactions, aiming at the creation of a knowledge network,
- organizational culture, the main assumption of which is the circulation of knowledge aiming to develop high-compliance organizational and individual objectives, create common mental models resulting in a large perception adjustment of the organization's members, enable a quick distribution of shared values and the redundancy of knowledge.

The importance of trust as an important factor affecting the quality of the process of knowledge sharing and efficiency of organizational knowledge management strategy and thus shaping the competitive position of the company, confirm the results of studies conducted in the Polish cultural conditions by J.O. Paliszkiewicz. According to them[25]:

---

[22] Ibidem, p. 85-86.
[23] Ibidem, p. 87-88.
[24] Scott P.B.: Knowledge workers: social, task and semantic network analysis. „Corporate Communications: An International Journal", Vol. 10, No.3, 2005, p. 258-262.
[25] Paliszkiewicz J.O.: Trust in management. Polish Science Publishing House, Warsaw 2013, p. 137-138, 140, 148.

- orientation level managers in creating trust is higher in companies with revenues of more than PLN 200 million and a revenue of companies with 5 to 50 million PLN,
- people with higher education have a higher level of orientation for the creation of trust,
- managers with the highest levels of management have the highest awareness creation in a company culture based on trust,
- for enterprises with revenues of over PLN 200 million high correlation exists between the orientation to create confidence and faster growth, more innovation, greater business success and lower cost.

6. Conclusions

Analysing the issues of mutual exchange of knowledge among professionals – a special group of employees with peculiar needs, requirements and expectations, it should be remembered that they are the holders of the most valuable asset from the point of view of shaping competitive advantage of an organization and generation of growth in the value of an enterprise – the silent knowledge. Therefore, organisations should strive to recruit and keep specialists working for them at any price. Furthermore, they should also focus their efforts to stimulate professionals to share knowledge among themselves, which is the backbone of knowledge transfer and the process of generation of organisational knowledge. As a result, actions focused on motivating knowledge workers to full openness in communication should be intentionally based in the strategy of knowledge management of an organisation.

It should also be pointed out that the factors which determine knowledge sharing have a predominantly psychological base. That is because behavioural economics proves that human behaviour is irrational by nature[26]. Specialists serving as carriers of knowledge have to be, first of all, ready to exchange it, capable of openness in communication in order to circulate their personal intellectual property, often created on the basis of professional experience gathered for years. Therefore, they have to be completely convinced that when they participate in the process of knowledge sharing, they will gain more than they offer[27].

In the above dimensions particular importance is gained by the multicultural context in which, since cultural affiliation determines the levels of mindset associated with the applied mental models, so important from the point of view of implementation of processes of

---

[26] Fazlagić J.: Knowledge sharing according to evolutionary psychology and behavioral economics. „Problems of Quality”, No. 4, 2011, p. 12.
[27] Kokavcová D., Malá D.: Knowledge Sharing – the Main Prerequisite of Innovation. „Organizacijø Vadyba: Sisteminiai Tyrimai”, No. 51, 2009, p. 50.

organisational creation of knowledge as well as sharing it – especially in the form of hidden knowledge. Evolution from the individual (subjective) through the cultural (inter-subjective) to the universal (objective) stage of mindset[28] requires time, intensification of contacts between professionals as well as building a culture of trust.

Therefore, when forecasting the effectiveness of management of knowledge employees, special consideration should be given to the main dimensions of national culture conditioning the course of the stages of knowledge management, including its generation or transfer (Tab. 2).

Table 2

Main national cultural dimensions conditioning the course of knowledge management stages

Knowledge management stage	Cultural dimensions conditioning knowledge management
Knowledge creation	Rationalism *versus* confucianism Attitude to time and long-time orientation Analysis *versus* synthesis Inner containtment *versus* outer containtment Uncertainty avoidance Collectivism *versus* individualism
Knowledge acquiring	Power distance Uncertainty avoidance Collectivism *versus* individualism Cooperation orientation *versus* transactional orientation
Knowledge transfer	Power distance Collectivism *versus* individualism Fragmentation *versus* comprehensiveness High *versus* low context
Knowledge preservation and protection	Collectivism *versus* individualism Fragmentation *versus* comprehensiveness

Source: Glińska-Neweś A.: Cultural considerations knowledge management in enterprise. TNOiK „Dom Organizatora", Torun 2007, p. 161.

Particularly valuable seem to be trying to make cross-cultural comparisons of the functioning of distributed communities of knowledge workers as well as empirical analyzes of the same specific needs of intellectual workers in the Polish conditions, taken in Polish literature and presented mostly in the form of case studies and storytelling formula[29].

The most difficult challenge facing the author of this paper is an empirical verification of the factors that determine the effectiveness of knowledge sharing among professionals in the Polish cultural conditions, in the context of industries and multicultural teams.

---

[28] See: Bjerke B.: Business leadership and culture. National management styles in the global economy. Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Cracow 2004, p. 18.

[29] See: Czarkowska L.D.: New professionalism. Professional culture of computer scientists – organization anthropology. Academic and Professional Publishing House, Warsaw 2010; Jemielniak D.: Knowledge-based work. Work in knowledge enterprises for example of high-tech organization. Academic and Professional Publishing House, Warsaw 2008; Kryszczuk M.D.: Conceptualization and methods of measurement of information sector employees. Academic and Professional Publishing House, Warsaw 2008; Morawski M.: Professional's management. Polish Economic Publishing House, Warsaw 2009.

Bibliography

1. Bendkowski J.: Conditions for development of trust in virtual environment, [in:] Human and work in a changing organisation. Management oriented on on the employee interest. Research Papers of Wrocław University of Economics, No. 224, 2011.

2. Bjerke B.: Business leadership and culture. National management styles in the global economy. Oficyna Ekonomiczna, Cracow 2004.

3. Czarkowska L.D.: New professionalism. Professional culture of computer scientists – organization anthropology. Academic and Professional Publishing House, Warsaw 2010.

4. Fazlagić J.: Knowledge sharing according to evolutionary psychology and behavioral economics. „Problems of Quality", No. 4, 2011.

5. Gamble P.R., Blackwell J.: Knowledge Management. A State of the Art Guide. Kogan Page, London 2001.

6. Glińska-Neweś A.: Cultural considerations knowledge management in enterprise. TNOiK „Dom Organizatora", Torun 2007.

7. Gruszczyńska-Malec G., Rutkowska M.: Strategies of knowledge management. Theoretic and practical models. Polish Economic Publishing House, Warsaw 2013.

8. Jemielniak D.: Knowledge-based work. Work in knowledge enterprises for example of high-tech organization. Academic and Professional Publishing House, Warsaw 2008.

9. Holste J.S., Fields D.: Trust and tacit knowledge sharing use. „Journal of Knowledge Management", Vol. 14, No. 1, 2010.

10. Kryszczuk M.D.: Conceptualization and methods of measurement of information sector employees. Academic and Professional Publishing House, Warsaw 2008.

11. Kodama M.: Innovation Networks in Knowledge-based Firms. Developing ICT-based Integrative Competences. Edward Elgar Publishing, Bodmin 2009.

12. Kokavcová D., Malá D.: Knowledge Sharing – the Main Prerequisite of Innovation. "Organizacijø Vadyba: Sisteminiai Tyrimai", No. 51, 2009.

13. Leeson C.: Driving KM behaviors and adoption through gamification. „KM World: Content, Document and Knowledge Management", March 2013.

14. Lin C-P.: To share or not to share: modeling knowledge sparing using exchange ideology as a moderator. „Personnel Review", Vol. 36, No. 3, 2007.

15. Mayfield M.: Tacit knowledge sharing: techniques for putting a powerful tool in practice. „Development and Learning in Organizations", Vol. 24, No. 1, 2010.

16. Morawski M.: Professional's management. Polish Economic Publishing House, Warsaw 2009.

17. Nonaka I., Takeuchi H.: The Knowledge-Creating Company. How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation. Poltext, Warsaw 2000.
18. Paliszkiewicz J.O.: Trust in management. Polish Science Publishing House, Warsaw 2013.
19. Perechuda K.: Knowledge workers as the creators of network potentials. „Human Resources Management", No. 5, 2005.
20. Scarbrough H., Amaeshi K.: Evaluation practices in the commercialization of early stage technology: the role of trust, [in:] Scarbrough H. (ed): The evolution of business knowledge. Oxford University Press, New York 2008.
21. Schrank G.: Sayonara Cubicles: The Knowledge Worker Revolution is Here. „Information Management", February 2013.
22. Scott P.B.: Knowledge workers: social, task and semantic network analysis. „Corporate Communications: An International Journal", Vol. 10, No. 3, 2005.
23. Taylor E.Z., Murthy U.S.: Knowledge Sharing among Accounting Academics in an Electronic Network of Practice. „Accounting Horizons", Vol. 23, No. 2, 2009.
24. Teece D.J.: Managing Intellectual Capital. Organizational, Strategic and Policy Dimensions. Oxford University Press, New York 2000.
25. Walczak W.: Knowledge management in enterprise. „Economics and Organization of Enterprise", No. 12, 2009.