

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER VERSUS GOOD SOCIETY OF THE SECOND *LA BELLE EPOQUE*¹

TRANSFER WIEDZY A „DOBRE” SPOŁECZEŃSTWO „DRUGIEJ” *LA BELLE EPOQUE*

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Abstract: Currently, we are witnessing the second *la belle époque* characterised by huge economic and social inequalities. Striving for a good state of society aims to reduce the inequalities conditioned by access to knowledge. One of the methods to reach this goal can consist of the conscious shaping of knowledge transfer between particular groups of knowledge agents, representing diverse, often overlapping, social and organisational categories. The purpose of this study is to check what sub-processes of knowledge transfer are implemented in specific groups of knowledge agents and what their context is from the perspective of the tools used, the main principles and the standards of behaviour. The main research hypothesis is that the course of knowledge transfer process depends on the fact of which groups of knowledge agents it concerns. Using the method of critical analysis and surveys supported by in-depth interviews, it was determined that knowledge sharing is the domain of professionals and the intergenerational dimension of knowledge transfer. Knowledge acquisition is most often carried out at the level of specialists' relations with other employees and at the intergenerational level. Knowledge sharing is a domain of specialists, and usually takes place during their contacts with other employees, while knowledge dissemination is the prime sub-process of the hierarchical dimension of knowledge transfer.

Keywords: knowledge transfer, employee diversity, knowledge agents, researches

Streszczenie: Współcześnie nastąpiła „druga” *la belle époque* charakteryzująca się ogromnymi nierównościami ekonomiczno-społecznymi. Dążenie do osiągnięcia stanu dobrego społeczeństwa celuje w niwelowanie nierówności, uwarunkowanych dostępem do wiedzy, a jednym ze sposobów może być świadome kształtowanie transferu wiedzy między poszczególnymi grupami agentów wiedzy, reprezentującymi zróżnicowane, często nakładające się, kategorie społeczne i organizacyjne. Celem opracowania jest sprawdzenie, jakie subprocesy transferu wiedzy, w których grupach agentów wiedzy są realizowane i jaki jest ich kontekst z perspektywy stosowanych narzędzi, głównych zasad oraz standardów zachowań. Główna hipoteza badawcza to przypuszczenie, że przebieg procesu transferu wiedzy uzależniony jest od tego, których grup agentów wiedzy dotyczy. Wykorzystując metodę analizy krytycznej oraz badania ankietowe wsparte wywiadami pogłębionymi, ustalono, że dzielenie się wiedzą to domena profesjonalistów oraz wymiaru międzypokoleniowego transferu wiedzy. Pozyskiwanie wiedzy jest najczęściej realizowane na poziomie relacji specjalistów z innymi pracownikami oraz międzypokoleniowym. Udostępnianie wiedzy, jest strefą specjalistów i dokonuje się zazwyczaj podczas ich kontaktów z innymi pracownikami a rozpowszechnianie wiedzy to naczelną subproces hierarchicznego wymiaru transferu wiedzy.

Słowa kluczowe: transfer wiedzy, zróżnicowanie pracowników, agenci wiedzy, badania

Introduction

Currently, conditions of the new economy apply and everyone has to function in the era of man-made industries based on knowledge and strength of mind. Some breakthrough technologies have been created, new industries have emerged and the

previously dominant sectors had to be redefined. These changes are both of global-economic importance and should be perceived in the context of the formation of a network society.

Knowledge, by gaining the attribute of domination, has become a new foundation

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of prosperity (Gou, Li, Lyu, Lyu, 2019, p. 6). It has been widely recognised as the intangible resource of prime importance for shaping competitive advantage and, therefore, consideration is made currently at every level of the economic life analysis through the focus on knowledge orientation. Discussions are carried out in a global perspective, as well as in the national economy or from the perspective of the organisation. At the macro level, all the elements that determine whether the national economy operates in the conditions of a knowledge-based economy are analysed, and consideration is being given on a global scale to the social consequences of occurring transformations. The level of organisation usually constitutes the domain of practical implementation of the concept of knowledge management (Pietruszka-Ortyl, 2019, p. 20-21).

The dynamic transition to a knowledge-based economy has led to transformations of the nature of work and its arrangement when operating with abstracts and ideas, which results in significant shifts in the structure of employment - decreasing numbers of the working class and an increase in the number of employees in the services sector. Additionally, the results of work, its effectiveness increasingly depend on the soft skills of employees (Solarczyk-Abroziak, 2018).

Currently, there is the "second" *la belle epoque*, in which, as in the case of the classic *la belle epoque* age, dated 1872-1914, enormous economic and social inequalities appeared and wealth was concentrated in the hands of a small group of the richest people (Gwiazda, 2015, p. 26-27). Only the nature of property has changed – it is knowledge and the capability to control it. Therefore, a new dimension of social inequality is pointed out – digital inequalities resulting from access to knowledge (Krot, Lewicka, 2016).

In the new knowledge-based economy, only highly qualified employees have experienced real jobs increase, but they are dismissed too, when their skills are outdated or too expensive, when there are less expensive employees with similar qualifications in some other part of the world. The basic social contract is being destroyed. Consequently, these key professionals, usually knowledge workers, quit as soon as the opportunity arises. As a result, the opportunities for a lifelong career disappear, which leads to growing inequalities. Organisations invest in the development of those employees who have the best fast learning skills, and these are usually conditioned by basic knowledge. Thus, the disproportions between employees and their knowledge resources are growing exponentially.

Among others, from this point of view, the role of knowledge transfer increases even more (Secundo, Toma, Schiuma, Passiante, 2019), especially that it is both recognised as basic and necessary to succeed in the field of its management in organisations (Gou, Li, Lyu, Lyu, 2019) and gains particular importance in the context of diversity of employees and the circumstances of their work (Ren, Yan, Wang, He, 2019). A need arises to propose solutions concerning the shaping of optimal conditions for its implementation, both universal ones and some dedicated to specific groups of stakeholders.

The study is of a theoretical and empirical character. Its aim is to synthesise literature devoted to knowledge transfer as a process with its participation and to indicate its dimensions in relation to the existing diversity on the labour market. By using the critical analysis method, the focus was on identification of the determinants of knowledge transfer implementation, proposal of tools to improve its course in individual employee groups, and identification of the key values and principles that apply to it. The purpose of the empirical part is to verify the suppositions according to which knowledge transfer is different in individual groups of employees, various sub-processes creating it dominate the transfer, and various instruments, principles and standards of behaviour are used to support its implementation.

Importance of knowledge transfer and diversity of contemporary employees – literature review

Knowledge transfer was a focus of attention of the researchers from the very beginning of the emergence of the concept of knowledge management (Du, Wang, 2019). It is considered to be, next to creating knowledge, one of the key factors for effective implementation of the most beneficial strategies for knowledge management (De Luca, Cano Rubio, 2019, p. 10). The contemporary "success-oriented" enterprise has to acquire new knowledge and support its internal diffusion, which should result in increasing the level of innovation in the organisation, creation of new solutions and, consequently, its dynamic development. The following terms are often used as synonyms of this process: knowledge diffusion, transfer, distribution, flow, exchange, transmission (Intezari, Taskin, Puleen, 2017, p. 499, 501).

The term "knowledge diffusion" should be treated as the broadest category, also taking into account the creation of knowledge as a result of its

flow. Its essence consists in self-reproduction of knowledge (Zhang, Li, Aziz-alaoui, Bertelle, Guan, Zou, 2016, p. 2). Compared to transfer, the process is closely related to the social context (Vlajcic, Marzi, Caputo, Dabic, 2019, p. 196) – it requires mutual interaction between its participants (Ren, Yan, Wang, He, 2019), it is conditioned by the characteristics of knowledge in the form of its viscosity and ambiguity (Klarl, 2014, p. 2), more strongly associated with silent knowledge and strongly dependent on the organisational culture of the enterprise (Paliszkiwicz, Svanadze, Jikia, 2017, p. 37). Therefore, knowledge diffusion takes into account the positive effects of its transfer, along with its conditions and context.

Knowledge transfer is defined most often in process terms (Secundo, Toma, Schiuma, Passiante, 2019, p. 152) and, therefore, it should be characterised as a process with its participation (De Luca, Cano Rubio, 2019, p. 11), which is the basis of organisational learning. It is the exchange of silent or explicit knowledge through specific channels between places, people, units or other elements of the organisational system - knowledge agents - aimed at the flow of knowledge of the right content, embedded in the right context, its creation and application in the organisation (Gou, Li, Luy, Luy, 2019; Liyanage, Elhag, Ballal, Li, 2009; Kim, Kang, Wang, 2016). This process encompasses a myriad of sub-processes (Milagres, Burcharth, 2019, p. 27) including search, access, assimilation and integration (Fileri, Alguezaui, 2014).

B. Mikula (2011, p. 64-65) distinguishes 4 of its sub-processes: knowledge acquisition (acquiring knowledge from various external and internal sources), knowledge disclosure (knowledge transfer directed to specific people), knowledge dissemination (a wider range of sharing aimed at creating a generally available resource out of this knowledge) and knowledge sharing (mutual transfer of knowledge by people in the communication process). Out of all the identified sub-processes, knowledge sharing is considered to be the most important one (Arif, Al. Zubi, Gupta, Egbu, Walton, Islam, 2017) because it means an activity in which entities exchange and jointly create new knowledge. Thus, it is necessary in the transformation of individual knowledge into organisational knowledge (Kožuch, Lenart-Gansiniec, 2016, p. 306).

Currently, knowledge circulation is treated as a factor in effective organisation management (Purgal-Popiela, 2017; Sinell, Iffländer, Muschner, 2017) which accounts for the level of enterprise innovation and the limits of dynamic development (Twarek,

Walecka-Jankowska, Martan, 2016; Luo, Lui, Kim, 2017) and the driving force of the modern economy (Michalak, Zagórowski, 2017). The conducted empirical research concerned knowledge transfer in specific geographical regions (Sagan, Zalewa, Gorganiuk, Jóźwik, 2011), economy sectors (Kania, Dygas, Kutkowska, Kalinowski, 2010; Firlej, Żmija, 2014; Dee, Leisyte, 2017) or organisational units of specific enterprises (Midor, Zasadzień, Szczęśniak, 2015).

To sum up, knowledge circulation requires time, adopting an attitude of readiness to co-operate, depends on people, on the quality of their knowledge, and on openness and flexibility (Leszczyńska, Pruchnicki, 2017, p. 1199). Among the main groups of factors determining the effectiveness of its course, the literature (Luo, Lui, Kim, 2017, 304; Dee, Leisyte, 2017, p. 357) most frequently mentions the level of organisational subject-matter learning capability, strength of the relationship between the sender and addressee of knowledge, characteristics of knowledge as a special resource (viscosity, ambiguity) and the level of development of the social and technological infrastructure of the knowledge environment (De Luca, Cano Rubio, 2019, p. 14).

The contemporary labour market is very diversified, which results in the emergence of certain inequalities. Most of all, its dichotomy is clearly observable (Janowska, 2015). On the one hand, its main actors are highly qualified employees – professionals of the new era who have a safe position of specialists desired by employers (Kumar Jha, Pandey, Varkkey, 2019), specialists with key competences and dictate the terms in their relations with them. In this perspective, the most important challenges include management of employees, who are culturally diverse, or different because of their preferences and expectations regarding work, as well as their talents. The second perspective points to the focus on a low-skilled labour force. Then, the issues specific to the employer's market regarding the shaping of the qualifications of young people, mature or socially excluded employees become the dominant ones. The conclusion is that this diversity of the labour market generates its inequalities, creating dimensions of their analysis, especially from the point of view of effective implementation of the knowledge transfer process in organisations. Therefore, knowledge transfer against employee diversity can be analysed in hierarchical systems (between employees occupying positions at various levels of organisation management or different places in the organisational structure of the enterprise or in its different international branches),

in intergenerational, intercultural and inter-organisational (in dependencies between employees, teams from individual enterprises or in systems: units, groups - and specific partner enterprises) dimensions, between professionals or in the aspect of the relations between specialists and other employees. Each indicated level of knowledge transfer analysis provides different challenges. They concern, among others, the issues related to the strategic value of transferred knowledge, its type, the most frequently occurring sub-processes of knowledge diffusion, and the optimal tools to stimulate knowledge circulation due to the category in question (for more details, see: Pietruszka-Ortyl, 2019, p. 21).

In reference to knowledge transfer between specialists, the focus on the knowledge-sharing sub-process is the key factor in its effectiveness. It is most important in the case of the group of employees as outstanding individuals because they have the resources of key knowledge, usually silent knowledge, which is very difficult to transfer (Kianto, Shujahat, Hussain, Nawaz, Ali, 2019, p. 181). In their case, interpersonal relationships and personal contacts that create a context of trust and reciprocity are the most important ones (Du, Wang, 2019, p. 35; Ensign, Hébert, 2010, p. 80). It is because the level of trust and distrust influences attitudes and behaviour such as entrepreneurial behaviour, behaviour on the labour market, relational behaviour, risk acceptance and control behaviour (Krot, Lewicka, 2016, p. 238). In the case of knowledge transfer in intercultural (Vlajcic, Marzi, Caputo, Dabic, 2019), and intergenerational aspects (Milagres, Burcharth, 2019), as well as partly in inter-organisational aspects, the effectiveness of this process with the participation of knowledge depends largely on the frequency of contacts – the more frequent contacts, the better for the knowledge transfer because then different mental models, metaphors and analogies are brought closer (Du, Wang, 2019, p. 35). The intergenerational transfer of knowledge takes on a special tone due to its increasingly wider range (Vlajcic, Marzi, Caputo, Dabic, 2019, p. 104-105). Several generations of employees coexist on the contemporary labour market, which is a challenge for those managing the companies (Ren, Y., Wang, He, 2019). For the organisation, both the youngest generation – proficient in the use of IT tools and born in the digital economy, as well as the older generation, that is the carrier of knowledge, is important (Godlewska-Majkowska, July, 2018, p. 9).

An important task consists in designing optimal circulation of knowledge between the organisation's

managers and their employees (Gaur, Ma, Ge, 2019), also in the aspect of global operations (hierarchical dimension of knowledge transfer) (De Luca, Cano Rubio, 2019). Then problems arise when it comes to proper communication and implementation of assumed strategies without adapting them to the requirements of local markets or other peculiarities of specific entities (Milagres, Burcharth, 2019). In such conditions, a clear message, accurate selection of tools supporting knowledge exchange tailored to the recipients, without mental shortcuts, cultural simplifications, neologisms or hermetic language, is important (Ishihara, Zolkiewski, 2017; Nobin, 2019).

Methodology of empirical research

The main hypothesis, formulated as the supposition that the course of the knowledge transfer process depends on what groups of knowledge agents are concerned, was the basis of pilot empirical research aimed at the initial analysis and diagnosis of the conditions of knowledge transfer in the perspective of diversity of the modern labour market. The main hypothesis was completed by the following specific hypotheses:

- a group of knowledge agents determines the primary sub-process dominant in the specific knowledge transfer process,
- various groups of knowledge agents have various preferences concerning the knowledge environment infrastructure,
- individual groups of knowledge agents apply, with various intensity, specific behaviour standards that regulate the process of knowledge transfer.

Such theoretical assumptions led to the emergence of specific questions and, thus, also research tasks in the form of identification of the following:

- the knowledge transfer sub-process dominant in the given group of knowledge agents,
- used in reference to specific groups of knowledge agents, methods and tools supporting the course of each of the distinguished knowledge transfer sub-processes,
- social and technological infrastructure of the knowledge environment preferred by relevant groups of knowledge agents,
- the principles applicable to knowledge transfer in specific groups of knowledge agents.

Table 1. Structure of the research sample due to the levels of knowledge transfer analysis

The dimension of knowledge transfer	The number and structure of the sample			
	intergenerational	Generation X 52,3% (46)	Generation Y 37,5% (33)	Generation Z 10,2% (9)
hierarchic	Top management 23,9% (21)	Medium management level 65,9% (58)	Operating level 26% (23)	
between specialists/ professionals and other employees	Professionals 26% (23)		Other employees 74% (65)	
intercultural	Ukrainians 21,6% (19)	English 12,5% (11)	Germans 10,2% (9)	Polish 55,7% (49)

Source: own elaboration based on the results of empirical research

In order to verify the research hypotheses made and the implementation of the research goals formulated, a questionnaire survey was carried out in the spring 2019. The research tool consisted of 15 close-ended questions, mostly multiple choice. In the end, complete surveys were obtained from 88 respondents. The respondents are a gender-homogeneous group - they were men, and varied when it comes to age (the average age is 38.5), for the most part with higher education (89.7% of respondents), with moderate professional experience, connected by various forms of cooperation, forming a network of cooperation, with an average seniority level of 14 years, representing various groups of knowledge agents and participating in knowledge transfer processes at various levels (Table 1). Therefore, respondents were assigned to several groups of knowledge agents at the same time and took part in knowledge circulation processes at several different levels of knowledge transfer analysis.

Results and discussion of conducted empirical research

In order to check the truthfulness of the assumptions made, particular groups of respondents were addressed. First of all, they were asked to indicate one of four sub-processes building knowledge transfer – the most frequent and preferred one, and the one most important for the effective implementation of knowledge flow.

In the case of knowledge transfer carried out by specialists, they indicated knowledge sharing sub-process as the dominant one and most important for them (73.9%). It manifests that this agent group has knowledge of high awareness of the importance of the action aimed at creating new knowledge and

based on the most valuable silent knowledge. High indications for knowledge acquisition are also significant (13.1%). They are the emanation of attitudes characteristic of specialists, resulting from the determination to learn on their own, directly from other people, as a result of functioning in communities of practitioners. In turn, little focus on knowledge dissemination (4.3%) and its sharing (8.7%) may suggest their low motivation in this area and adopting the orientation that knowledge is power. Therefore, the redesign of incentive systems should be considered so that they stimulate the implementation of these sub-processes, along with the use of appropriate instruments catalysing these actions, and thus leading to the transformation of silent knowledge into explicit knowledge and of human capital into the company's structural capital. The inter-organisational level of knowledge transfer is carried out with even use of four sub-processes. However, clear trends can be noted in the application of knowledge protection strategies (low indications for the dissemination of knowledge – 14.8%) and determination to consciously create the image of the organisation externally (knowledge dissemination 29.5% of choices). The hierarchical transfer of knowledge proves low orientation on feedback acquisition (knowledge acquisition 18.2% of indications) and suggests a large formalization of activities limiting knowledge dissemination and knowledge sharing (both sub-processes after 22.7% of indications). Intergenerational knowledge transfer is mostly based on knowledge sharing (60.2% of answers) and knowledge acquisition (29.5% of selections). Knowledge agents appreciate the mutual benefits of working with people representing different systems of values and ways of communication. Openness to co-operation based on observing the principle of reciprocity is well

established. In the case of the intercultural level of knowledge transfer, the answers reflect its difficulty and complexity – knowledge sharing is most flawed (27.3% of selections) – its main limitation consists of various mental models and various cultural inclinations regarding the communication process. The results regarding knowledge transfer between professionals and other employees are thought-provoking. They can be caused by a large disproportion in the number of specialists and representatives of other employees (23/65). Focus on acquiring knowledge by other employees (30.8% responses), the willingness to disseminate professional knowledge to other employees (28.4%) and a clear closure for the dissemination and sharing of knowledge (20.4% of selections) is emphasised.

When it comes to the most frequently used and preferred instruments supporting specific knowledge transfer sub-processes, the following regularities can be identified:

- knowledge acquisition in most groups of knowledge agents is conducted using on-the-job instructions (mean 58.45%), demonstration and shows (mean 42.2%); except for the level among professionals in which specialised presentations dominate (45.3%) and the inter-organisational dimension where presentations (63.7%) and e-mail are also used most often (88.8%);
- knowledge disclosure is carried out through on-the-job instructions (mean 62.8%), as well as meetings and briefings (mean 61.98%); other indications characterise the professional dimension of knowledge transfer – using mainly training sessions (56.8%) - and the inter-organisational level – at which product manuals (58.2%) and documentation sharing is popular (56.1%);
- knowledge dissemination is carried out using more diverse tools for specific groups of knowledge agents; advertising the company and its products is used at all levels of the analysis of knowledge transfer sub-processes (mean 52.32%); speeches in the environment (mean 48.65%) and preparation of specialised publications (mean 51.03%) are also common; in the professional (62.3%) and intercultural

dimension (65.8%), speeches in the environment are mainly used, and at the inter-organisational level – enterprise websites (89.2%);

- knowledge sharing is based on the most diverse tools - in the hierarchical dimension, meetings and briefings (63.2%) as well as group work training (43.2%) are most often used; in intergenerational knowledge sharing, group work training (43.2%) and mentoring (38.2%) work best; professionals use communities of practice (64.2%) and coaching (51.3%) most often, and representatives of different cultures – communities of practice (51.3%), and meetings and briefings (45.3%); specialists most frequently share knowledge with other employees during coaching (77.2%) and mentoring (74.2%); inter-organisational level of knowledge sharing is, in turn, based on communities of practice (45.6%) and group work training (38.2%).

Knowledge agents forming various groups due to diverse working conditions also have various preferences as to the infrastructure of the knowledge environment (table 2). In the breakdown into the conditions of the social environment of knowledge and the conditions of technical infrastructure of the knowledge environment, definitely social conditions (focus on the individual, striving for meritocracy at the expense of rejecting the hierarchy, arrangement of knowledge around practice communities, appreciation of work input regardless of organisational boundaries and place in the hierarchy) are more important when implementing the process of knowledge transfer in the intergenerational, specialist and intercultural dimension. In turn, the technical infrastructure of the knowledge environment is important at the inter-organisational and professional level of knowledge transfer. Therefore, it is easily observable that where the knowledge transfer process is based on explicit knowledge, the advanced technical infrastructure of the knowledge environment works. Social conditions of the knowledge environment are applied, required and preferred in the case of the levels of knowledge transfer where silent, high-context knowledge diffusion takes place or the strategy of knowledge creation or protection is basic.

Table 2. Conditions determining the infrastructure of the knowledge environment

Condition	Hierarchic	Inter-generational	Between professionals	Intercultural	Between specialists and others	Inter-organisational
focus on individual	28.3%	56.3%	86.3%	83.4%	46.3%	36.4%
striving for meritocracy	23.4%	48.6%	84.2%	48.6%	35.6%	28.3%
arrangement of knowledge around practice communities	21.3%	38.5%	83.2%	51.4%	32.8%	45.3%
appreciating the work input	56.8%	54.7%	64.2%	58.3%	59.6%	38.9%
access to information from many databases	34.2%	43.1%	82.1%	36,9%	42.0%	59.1%
availability various types of data	28.9%	45.8%	79.2%	38.1%	29.3%	62.3%
intuitive data interfaces	32.9%	26.1%	74.3%	29.1%	36.6%	46.8%
infrastructure conducive to sharing information from many sources	39.1%	40.2%	62.3%	38.2%	45.1%	39.1%
possibility of data editing and storage	28.1%	33.1%	49.2%	38.2%	29.1%	32.1%

Source: own study based on the results of empirical research

Table 3. Standards of behaviour and general principles relating to knowledge transfer by knowledge agent groups

Guidelines	Hierarchic	Intergenerational	Professional	Intercultural	Specialists and others employed	Interorganisational
customer-orientation	38.1%	45.4%	59.2%	41.6%	38.1%	43.5%
informal communication	25.4%	48.5%	62.1%	51.2%	26.4%	24.3%
knowledge sharing is a value	45.6%	49.9%	65.3%	50.8%	39.4%	34.2%
risk avoidance	45.6%	28.3%	24.2%	36.9%	36.2%	45.6%
power = knowledge	54.3%	34.5%	36.3%	31.2%	43.2%	51.3%
equal opportunities for all employees	38.3%	51.4%	38.9%	46.3%	29.4%	34.2%
continuous employee training and education	51.3%	55.3%	69.2%	50.9%	39.7%	23.4%
"open doors" policy	37.9%	59.1%	69.5%	48.6%	40.5%	39.4%
evenly distributed responsibility	29.9%	45.8%	59.4%	51.2%	26.3%	28.9%
mutual interactions	46.3%	61.3%	71.2%	67.3%	29.4%	36.4%
openness	54.3%	59.3%	56.3%	69.4%	36.7%	39.2%
knowledge as the dominant resource	63.4%	47.9%	73.4%	54.3%	40.4%	43.9%
continuous learning at the individual, team, organisation and network level	41.2%	44.6%	72.3%	52.3%	39.4%	39.4%
seeking and triggering constructive criticism	29.4%	38.4%	68.9%	39.4%	29.8%	28.6%
natural choice of leaders	31.2%	56.1%	70.1%	46.3%	40.1%	26.3%
highly positive personal commitment	49.3%	57.2%	73.8%	43.8%	35.5%	49.2%
Leaving space for spontaneous and informal events and behaviours	28.3%	36.2%	65.4%	37.4%	29.8%	25.3%

Source: own elaboration based on empirical research carried out

When it comes to the basic standards of behaviour and the rules governing knowledge transfer, openness and the belief that knowledge is the dominant resource is valid in particular groups of knowledge agents, as well as the following activities, attitudes and rules (Table 3):

- regarding the hierarchical level and the dimension between specialists and other employees – knowledge=power, which suggests that some knowledge agents consider knowledge as the basis of their power, which may significantly limit the diffusion of knowledge,
- in the case of intergenerational dimension and between professionals and other employees – the "open door" policy applies and facilitates the exchange of silent knowledge,
- in the circulation of knowledge among themselves, professionals particularly adhere to the rule of highly positive personal commitment and the maxim of continuous learning,
- moreover, inter-organisational transfer of knowledge is mostly based on highly positive personal commitment and, however, treating knowledge as a source of power; it is also characterised by high risk avoidance related to uncontrolled knowledge transfer.

Conclusions, research limitations and paper contributions

The principles of "good society" by T. Piketty postulate to eliminate social inequalities resulting from the concentration of wealth (Drabowicz, 2016). While pointing to the ageing of societies and talent shortages, it is emphasised that overcoming them could contribute to improvement of the overall well-being (Krot, Lewicka, 2016). Considering the fact that currently, in the conditions of the knowledge-based economy, wealth is concentrated around knowledge (Gou, Li, Lyu, Lyu, 2019), and conscious control over its diffusion in various groups of the labour market gains particular importance. The discussed results should be considered demonstrative only because they have clear limitations due to the size and proportions of the research sample. Research should only be perceived as pilot considerations that merely confirm the diversity and complexity of knowledge transfer across various groups of knowledge agents.

Nonetheless, they prove that in the case of knowledge sharing it is a sub-process being the domain of professionals, the intergenerational dimension and knowledge exchange. Knowledge acquisition is most often carried out at the level of specialists relations with other employees and at the

intergenerational level. Knowledge sharing is the domain of specialists and takes place during their contact with other employees. Knowledge dissemination is, in turn, the main sub-process of the hierarchical dimension of knowledge transfer.

Important hints improving and shaping the implementation of knowledge transfer sub-process are provided by the answers of the respondents in the form of principles regulating knowledge transfer which they selected. It is necessary to develop those that are not yet practical, especially to limit the tendency to avoid risk, work on the natural choice of leaders and leaving space for events and spontaneous and informal behaviour, as well as the search and triggering of constructive criticism. Attitudes confirming the application of the principle "knowledge=power" should be stigmatised because of being a manifestation of a lack of openness, limited trust and may result in opportunistic behaviour, which is dysfunctional from the organisation's perspective.

The paper has both theoretical and practical value. The theoretical contributions of this article are: identification of the essence of knowledge transfer in the context of knowledge diffusion process, indication of knowledge transfer dimensions and key factors that determinate knowledge flows. The paper also highlights the significance of particular the knowledge transfer subprocesses depending on identified dimensions and utilization of knowledge transfer instruments by knowledge transfer subprocess and knowledge agent groups. Identified conditions determining the infrastructure of the knowledge environment could lead to particular directions of evolution. Verified standards of behaviour and general principles relating to knowledge transfer by knowledge agent groups could also lead to emerging potential areas of knowledge transfer dysfunctions and give suggestions on how to prevent pathological actions and attitudes.

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