Understanding the relevance of knowledge flows.
How to realize the benefits of knowledge transfer processes

Doctoral thesis
PhD in Management
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Abstract

Managing and exploiting knowledge flows is an imperative for all firms. Scholars, practitioners, and analysts agree on the importance of production, diffusion, and use of knowledge as the most relevant drivers of the world economy. Being knowledge tacit or explicit, organizations need to recognize it as a valuable resource and tap into the collective intelligence and skills of employees in order to create a greater organizational knowledge base and remain competitive in the global marketplace. Consistently, investigating knowledge, how this may be accumulated and then used as well as its consequences for individual and organizational performance is still a hot topic in several fields of research.

Starting from this premise, this dissertation proposes four studies on different yet interrelated knowledge-related topics. They are categorized into three research areas: cognition in knowledge-based processes, knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer, and knowledge utilization. Cognition in knowledge-based processes is addressed by Chapter 3, which links boundary spanning literature with top management teams’ members interacting with both internal and external networks. The second research area (i.e., knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer) has led to the development of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 which respectively investigate the organizational antecedents to employees’ knowledge sharing behaviors and vicarious learning among companies engaging in licensing agreements. Knowledge utilization is examined in Chapter 6, whose purpose is to explore the effect of individual creativity and job design dimensions on employees’ orientation toward using the already available knowledge. See Table 1 here below for an outline of the thesis.

**Keywords:** top management team, vicarious learning, knowledge transfer, knowledge utilization.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#Paper/n. Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type of paper</th>
<th>Level of analysis</th>
<th>Dataset</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
<th>Research area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1 (Chapter 3)</td>
<td>“Governing from the periphery: Impact of top management team boundary spanning on strategic decision making”</td>
<td>Conceptual</td>
<td>Team level</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Top management team, social exchange, decision making/distributed decision making</td>
<td>Cognition in knowledge-based processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2 (Chapter 4)</td>
<td>“A motivation crowding effect on knowledge sharing within organizational flexible structures”</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>Individual level</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing dataset on international manufacturing firms – University of Florence</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing, motivation crowding-effect, integrative mechanisms, rewards</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 3 (Chapter 5)</td>
<td>“When vicarious learning rewards the originating firm: Exploring the learning opportunities available to the licensor”</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>Firm level</td>
<td>Longitudinal dataset on licensing agreements from 1986 to 2014, disclosed to the USA SEC and compiled by KTMine</td>
<td>Vicarious learning, licensing, incentives</td>
<td>Knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 4 (Chapter 6)</td>
<td>“Realizing the benefits of knowledge sharing: An empirical investigation of knowledge utilization”</td>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>Individual level</td>
<td>FOKS dataset – Copenhagen Business School</td>
<td>Knowledge utilization, creativity, feedback, autonomy</td>
<td>Knowledge utilization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1 - Outline of the thesis**

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