

# Relationship Between Knowledge Sharing and Emotional Intelligence

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## **Abstract**

The most important object of knowledge management is knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer is a key factor of organizational success. To the good management of knowledge sharing we have to understand the motivation and attitudes of those people who are able to share their knowledge. Because sharing of implicit knowledge is voluntary, it arises from the motivation of its participants. In their motivation emotional intelligence plays the most important role. (Kalkan, 2005). In this study, I will deal with those elements of emotional intelligence which are in relation with the sharing of implicit knowledge. I examined successful Hungarian organizations in my empiric work. I did a primer, quantitative research with the help of a questionnaire to highlight the positive relation between implicit knowledge sharing and elements of emotional intelligence.

**Key words:** Knowledge, Knowledge sharing, Emotional intelligence

## **Introduction**

All organization expresses their own definition of knowledge and their own process of knowledge management. In general, the process of knowledge management can be defined as knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing or knowledge using. As we know, the knowledge that has not been used, does not create value. In order to the knowledge contributes to the organization's success, you need to use it. Today knowledge is a productive factor which will increase if it is used and shared. The aim of this study is to explore the theoretical framework for knowledge sharing within the organizations and find its relationship with emotional intelligence.

## **Conceptual examination of knowledge sharing and emotional intelligence**

The knowledge management researches (Davenport, 2001; Tomka, 2009; Nonaka, 1991; Ismail, 2006) support the view that the collective level of organizational knowledge comes from the communication between the member of its staff and from the exchange and share of individual learnings. During their work they can increase their individual as well as their organizational knowledge with the acquisition of new skills and knowledge production (Mura-Machova, 2015). In simple terms we can define knowledge management as knowledge transfer or knowledge sharing.

Researches on knowledge sharing began in the 1970s (Szeleccki, 1999). However, researches had especially intensified during the 1990s, and many scientific studies have been conducted in relation to knowledge management and knowledge sharing in Hungary too since the 2000s (Tomka, 2009). Accordingly, it is predicted that this interest will increase in the future. The

sharing of knowledge within the organization is very important because knowledge is regarded as a source of organizational competitiveness and as strategical capital. So in our information economy those organization which has more knowledge, has more competitive capacity (Szeleccki, 1999).

On the one hand sharing of knowledge is exchange of knowledge between two individuals. The aim of it is to make knowledge usable for individuals within an organization. In other words, knowledge sharing is a kind of knowledge trading process in order to understand and use it (Zoltayné, 2002).

According to another definition the sharing of knowledge is a social, mutual and interactive culture which involves the exchange of knowledge, skills and experiences of subordinates. This requires, however, that knowledge should be made available to others within an organization. A number of studies shows that the aim of knowledge sharing is primarily the creation of new knowledge from existing knowledge (Goh, 2002). Knowledge sharing thereby enables to increase innovation performance and reduce unnecessary learning efforts (Ismail, 2006).

The sharing of knowledge can be defined as a social behavior, which influences a series of physical, technical, psychological, cultural and personal factors. Knowledge sharing has many advantages, which are discussed in details in theoretical literature (Davenport, 2001). However, the practical researches show that people think that knowledge sharing is unnatural and they usually refrain from sharing their knowledge with others. Further inhibition factor may be the inadequate connection between the source and the receiver, the reward is not enough incentive and motivative, insufficient time and lacks of organizational culture. (Bencsik, 2015).

Knowledge sharing is highly dependent on the type of knowledge as well. Knowledge can be explicit or implicit. Explicit knowledge can be plotted and described within an organization with rules, cases, models, datas or using other forms. Explicit knowledge usually stores in knowledge-based systems and can be used directly by the people who need it in order to solve specific problems. However, implicit knowledge is very subjective, based on our own experience and often context-specific, so its expression is hard (Polanyi, 1994).

The sharing of implicit knowledge is not only the biggest challenge and obstacle in knowledge management, but also the most important factor of knowledge management and the measurement of organizational learning and performance. Tampoe (1996) concluded that the motivation to share our implicit knowledge primarily comes from the needs of personal growth, operational anatomy and honors. Hendrisk (1998) found that this motivation arises from the feeling of accomplishment, recognition system, operational autonomy, challenge, liability and the possibility of promotion. In our view, however, it's more emotional intelligence contingent.

Emotional intelligence was originally developed by Salovey and Mayer (1997), but it became more popular by Daniel Goleman. The definition of emotional intelligence is developed from the theory of intelligence. However, the definition of intelligence is still changing today. It

includes information processing, experiential learning skills, environmental adaptability, reasoning and thinking patterns. Emotions are complex samples of reactions that includes behavioral and physiological elements near the personally experienced events. However, the tests of intelligence and emotional nature did not result any clear conceptual concept today (Fineman, 2003).

Emotional intelligence is a series of skills, which deals with emotions and processing of emotional information. Goleman (2004) defines emotional intelligence as "the ability to recognize our own feelings and equally those of others, to motivate ourselves well and to handle our feelings in ourselves and in our relations too," and claims that this is a "learnable skill which determines our potential success." Emotional intelligence framework includes four components: self-awareness, self-regulation, social and networking skills. According to Bar-On with our emotional intelligence we can manage flexibly our personal, social and environmental changes, cope with stressful situations, problem solving and decision making (Bar-On, 2006).

Emotional intelligence involves the accurate assessment and expression of emotions, and the regulation of emotions to enhance our lives and our decisions. Emotional intelligence represents the needs, motives and real values that govern all attitude displayed by individuals and define human relations and workplace success (Watkin, 2000). In this way related to the concept and purpose of knowledge sharing.

### **The relationship between knowledge sharing and emotional intelligence**

Therefore sharing of knowledge is an important aspect of the success of the organization, so it is necessary to understand what factors have great impact on knowledge sharing. In order to share implicit knowledge, it is important to know the attitudes of employee. The sharing implicit knowledge is voluntary, the motivation of participants comes from internal motivation (Kalkan, 2005). The components of emotional intelligence - understanding your emotions, use and manage it - have great impact on the group's work and our role in a team. Realistic self-knowledge has an impact on the confidence of people, and networking capability can help to influence the group. The persuasive skills without our own experiences and knowledge is meaningless. So someone in the group can only be successful if he use his implicit knowledge with the support of his persuasion. With the help of sharing implicit knowledge within a group, it can make better decisions, thus developing skills and organizational intelligence (Milton, 2005).

The key success factor of sharing knowledge is the human factor: the individual's identity, motivation and commitment towards the organization. The feeling of the importance of our knowledge, the identity of the receiver and the evaluation of relationship with colleagues can affect the share of implicit knowledge too (Mura - Horvath, 2015). Therefore, to maintain our organization in long-term we should help the flow of knowledge. This requires the evolving of emotionally intelligent organization where all internal organizational communication channel should be opened. To do this it is necessary to develop the appropriate organizational culture as well. Another important factor is changing the attitudes of staff. They have to realize that the sharing of knowledge can facilitate their own work as well. The leaders have a

great responsibility in it. The management needs to improve the ways in which knowledge can be shared, and priority should be given to the employee's ideas, proposals and discoveries. This requires the existence of emotional competencies on organizational level, especially empathy, the ability to understand other people.

After analyzing the domestic and foreign literature, I seem to have been very few studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing. For its practical examination empirical research was conducted, in which the organizational emotional intelligence was formulated based on the following components: organizational self-awareness and self-control, networking competencies with employees and partners, emotional intelligence of leaders and corporate culture.

### **Research methodology**

The primary objective of the empirical research was to explore the emotional intelligence of Hungarian companies, and its effect on the sharing of knowledge. To this end, I conducted an exploratory quantitative research with questionnaire. Empirical research questions of my examination was that is there a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and knowledge transfer. To answer that question, I examined the willingness of emotionally intelligent companies to transfer knowledge, assuming that the transfer of knowledge - specifically the transfer of implicit knowledge - shows a significantly different picture among emotionally intelligent organizations than organizations with average emotional intelligence. My hypothesis was:

- H1: The possession of organizational emotional intelligence facilitates the transfer of tacit knowledge in organizations.

With quantitative research I could made the datas more analyzable. The questionnaire used in the quantitative research consisted of three main parts. The first section examined the emotional intelligence of organizations along 112 statements. Most of the issues were positive attitude adjustment, which was characteristic of emotionally intelligent organizations, while 27 statements was negative to control the outstanding cases. The closed, structured questions examined the components of organizational emotional intelligence (organizational self-awareness and self-control, relationship employees and partners, emotionally intelligent leader and organizational culture). The second part examined the practices related to knowledge management. Specifically the frequency of use of methods of knowledge transfer. 18 implicit and 13 explicit knowledge transfer methodology were included in this section, which were the most common forms of knowledge sharing. The final section set out the company's general information in order to control and obtain the representativeness of the sample. The data were analyzed using SPSS system. The the analysis cross-tables, clusters and analysis of variance were used.

### **Examination of hypothesis**

The results of the attitude statements were averaged for each respondent. Because emotional intelligence is the predictor of outstanding performance, so those respondents will be

emotionally intelligent whose result was more than 4,1. On this presumption 63 respondents can be considered as emotionally intelligent, while the large majority of the respondents, 151 organizations are not considered to be emotionally intelligent based on the examined competencies.

Table 1.: Frequency of emotionally intelligent organizations

		Frequency	Distribution	Cumulative distribution
	Emotionally intelligent	63	29,4	29,4
	Average	151	70,6	100,0
	Total	214	100,0	

*Own edited*

In order to verify my hypothesis firstly cluster analysis was performed among knowledge transfer methods used by respondents. Two clusters were created, according to how typical is the transfer of knowledge and what types of methods were used by the respondents. Based on the results of cluster analysis, it was found that the respondents are only slightly more than a 25 %, 61 respondents encourage the transfer of knowledge.

Table 2.: of knowledge transfer among the examined organizations

		Frequency	Distribution	Cumulative distribution
	Typical	61	28,5	31,6
	Not typical	132	61,7	100,0
	Total	193	90,2	
Missing data		21	9,8	

*Own edited*

To examine the hypothesis cross-table analysis was performed at first. With this I could test the existence and strength of relationship between organizational emotional intelligence and knowledge transfer. The table of distribution are already suggesting the existence of this relationship. 80% of those organizations which use knowledge transfer methods consciously are emotionally intelligent too. 90 % of those organizations who did not use knowledge management tools are only average organizations. The relationship between emotional intelligence and transfer of knowledge is symmetric.

Table 3.: Result of crosstable analysis

			Emotionally intelligent organizations		Total
			Emotionally intelligent	Average	
Knowledge sharing	Typical	Frequency	48	13	61
		Distribution	85,7%	9,5%	31,6%
	Not typical	Frequency	8	124	132
		Distribution	14,3%	90,5%	68,4%
Total	Frequency		56	137	193
	Distribution		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

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As the statistical indicators shows the relationship is significant and strong. So the hypothesis was adopted, the organizational emotional intelligence has strong, significant relationship with knowledge sharing.

Table 4.: Indicators of the relation between knowledge transfer and emotionally intelligent organizations

	Value	Significance
Pearson's chi-square	4,412	,036
Cramer V	0,633	,036
Contingence	0,535	,036
Number of examined data	193	

*Own edited*

Because with the questionnaire I examined the use of explicit and implicit knowledge sharing too variance analysis was necessary in order to determine whether there is any difference in the characteristics of used tools between emotionally intelligent organizations and average organizations. According to the Levene test the means of 12 methods were very homogeneous, and variance analysis can not be performed. The cause of this homogeneity was the general use of three devices (internal employee communications networks, internet and intranet, trainings) and the lack of use for nine tools (mentoring, coaching, quality circles, creating videos, social networking, knowledge map, need to know matrix, aftergrowth plan and job-rotation). Thus, in the variance analysis 19 methods were tested. 14 of them are implicit knowledge sharing tools. Based on the results of ANOVA table we can determine

that there is not significant difference between emotionally intelligent and average organizations in the using of 6 methods. In contrast, 13 of the methods shows significant difference on the basis of the organizational emotional intelligence. The vast majority of these tools are able to share implicit knowledge. As we can see in Table 5: 4 explicit knowledge sharing tools and 9 implicit knowledge sharing tools are used more actively in emotionally intelligent organizations.

Table 5.: The influence of organizational emotionally intelligence on the use of knowledge transfer tools

<b>Knowledge sharing methods</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Existence of relationship</b>
Databasis, datatables	0,000	+
Expert groups	0,000	+
Simulation	0,000	+
Training to refresh knowledge	0,000	+
Learning from past events	0,001	+
Group work with people working in the same field	0,003	+
Informal meetings	0,004	+
Internal discussions	0,005	+
Organization of lectures	0,015	+
Mixed groups	0,018	+
Using documentation system	0,019	+
Informal brainstorming	0,025	+
Exit interviews	0,034	+
Corporate workshop	0,056	-
Storytelling	0,099	-
Informal conversations weekly / monthly	0,108	-
Corporate programs (business trip, corporate dinner)	0,118	-
Coffee corner	0,409	-
Corporate Sportclub	0,591	-
Other: On-line discussion, Bible lessons, Team building, Task-meeting, Common meal in the canteen, Talks before	0,725	-

My research therefore confirms my hypothesis. Strong and significant relationship can be demonstrated between the company's practice of sharing knowledge - especially the sharing of implicit knowledge - and emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is important not only for humans but also for organizations. An organization's social existence is not possible without emotions. However, an organization's emotional intelligence contributes to its knowledge sharing, thus contributes to its success and its long-term competitive advantage. As the result of my research emotional intelligence shows a significant correlation with sharing knowledge. This finding was confirmed in an ANOVA test, which determined strong relationship between organizational emotional intelligence and sharing implicit knowledge. Those companies that are emotionally intelligent, based on the results of my research is more active in using implicit knowledge transfer devices than their counterparts without emotional intelligence.

### **Conclusions**

With my research proved that the bureaucratic methods is no longer justified. In the world economy growing competition hierarchical systems with workers and leaders turn against each other are gradually being replaced by networks and teams, the hourly wages are being replaced by special owner benefits; permanent jobs are being replaced by liquid careers, for once and for all acquired skills for lifelong learning. The organization's emotional intelligence contributes to job satisfaction of employees, which brings from the people the most, and makes them loyal to the company. With this, the company can gain a competitive edge that others will not be able to achieve. Developed emotional intelligence increases the resistance, preserves the organization's health, promote its growth (Goleman, 2004).

The development of knowledge management systems, and within that, above all, the knowledge sharing is important in terms of the success of organizations, since in the organization can be found implicit knowledge, which cannot be copied by competitors, and it can mean long-term benefits for the company. However, the knowledge hidden in the human brain cannot be fully utilized by the company; it should seek to "storage" as widely as possible! To achieve this emotional intelligence would help. In order to support our organization the flow of knowledge, we need to ensure the design of emotionally intelligent organization, thus ensuring that all internal organizational communication channels are open. To do this it is necessary to develop the appropriate organizational culture. An important factor is changing the attitudes of employees to knowledge. Those employees realize that sharing knowledge makes easier their own work as well. The leaders have a great responsibility in the fact that the employees have a positive stand on the sharing of knowledge. Management must improve the ways in which knowledge can be shared, and should give priority to the employee's ideas, proposals and discoveries. This requires the existence of organizational emotional skills, a high level of emotional intelligence company.

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