



Aalto-yliopisto

Ako-E3020 Knowledge Management in Practice (5 op)

Luento #5

14.3. 2019 – Eerikki Mäki eerikki.maki@aalto.fi

Agenda 14.3.2019

- **Luento #5**

- Työskentelyä ryhmässä tehtävän harjoituksen parissa
- Tiedon ja osaamisen johtaminen yli ammatillisten, organisatoristen ym. rajapintojen
- Työskentelyä ryhmässä tehtävän harjoituksen parissa

- Työskentelyä harjoitustyön parissa

Oppimispäiväkirja 5

- Kirjoita kuvitteellinen kirje organisaatiosi johdolle tai esimiehellesi, jossa identifioit jonkun tiedon tai osaamisen johtamisen haasteen, ja kerro kuinka asia pitäisi mielestäsi korjata. Käytä luentomateriaalia ja artikkeleita liittääksesi kokemuksesi johonkin teoriaan tai tieteelliseen malliin.

What kinds of problems KCM projects aim to solve?

- Problems are often *ill-defined*
 - Intended objectives are hard to define (=> how to measure or evaluate what have been achieved?)
 - Path to solution is not clear (=> how to find it?)
 - Outcomes are hard to foresee or predict (=> how to convince the decision maker?)
- These are all typical features of many OD (organizational development) efforts
- Scientist/practitioner working with these kinds of problems must be skilled and knowledgeable about the subject/phenomenon

What is practical?

- Theoretical models and approaches are practical because they help at focusing attention
 - They help at finding and elaborating problems
 - They help at generating solutions
- Please notice, people often find what they are looking for and ignore other evidence
 - If you are looking through a certain theoretical model / lenses, you may overlook other relevant aspects



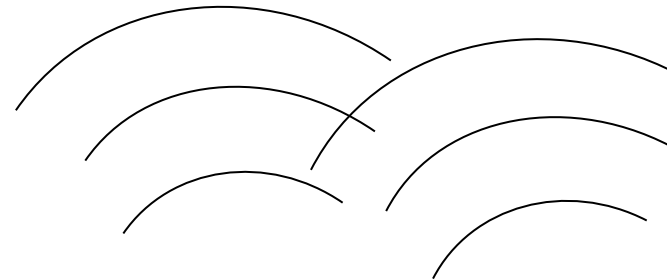
Exploring
(creating new knowledge)

Exploiting
(utilizing existing knowledge)

Finding Storing Integrating Sharing Adopting Etc.



What kind of knowledge is processed?



Technology

Leadership &
management

Practical aspects to be considered (e.g. in your case assignment)

- Does it emphasize exploration or exploitation of knowledge?
- What kind of knowledge is involved?
- What are the knowledge processes you aim to develop?
- What is the role of technology? How about leadership/management aspects?

Identifying and breaking boundaries



Organizational boundaries

- Efficiency
 - Legal governing activities
- Power
 - Ability to control exchange relations
- Competence
 - What we can do and how we utilize our resources
- Identity
 - Who we are

**All these boundaries are dynamic
and they can change over time**

Formal and informal boundaries

- Formal boundaries
 - Based on contracts and legal agreements
- Informal boundaries
 - Man-made boundaries

Boundaries in virtual organizations

- Time
 - Distance
 - Organisation
 - Culture
-
- Members of an organization respond differently to these boundaries (*“People are different”*)

Knowledge transfer media across boundaries

- Moving people
- Teaching & training
- Communicating (face-to-face, using technology)
- Transferring technology
- Sharing documented knowledge
- Working together
- Etc.

Beyond boundaries...

- ...they (people) are different. In terms of...
 - Expectations and objectives
 - Expertise
 - Working methods
 - Language
 - Applied technologies
 - Cultural norms
 - Etc.
- ...and knowledge is...
 - Sticky
 - Embedded in context
 - Hardly perceived
 - Difficult to absorb
 - Etc.

So, why to collaborate* with them?

- First, reducing costs is a common reason for collaboration.
- Second, organizations may aim at new positioning in markets through interorganizational collaboration.
- Third, interorganizational collaboration may provide a vehicle to access new knowledge and capabilities.

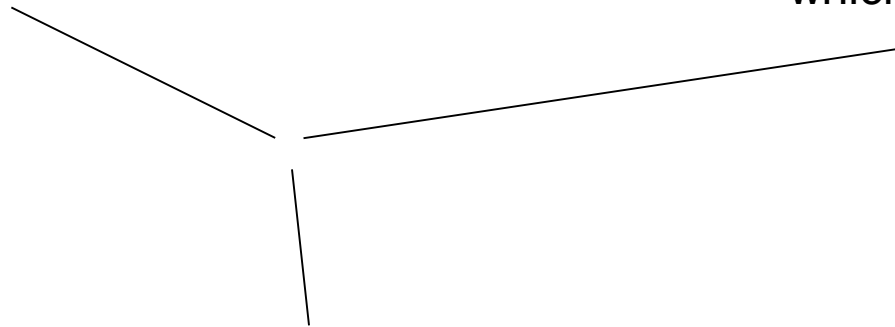


*The Latin origin for the term “collaborate” is “to labor together”. In the Merriam-Webster dictionary it is defined as “to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor”.

Critical factors of success

The preconditions and motives that attract organizations to collaborate

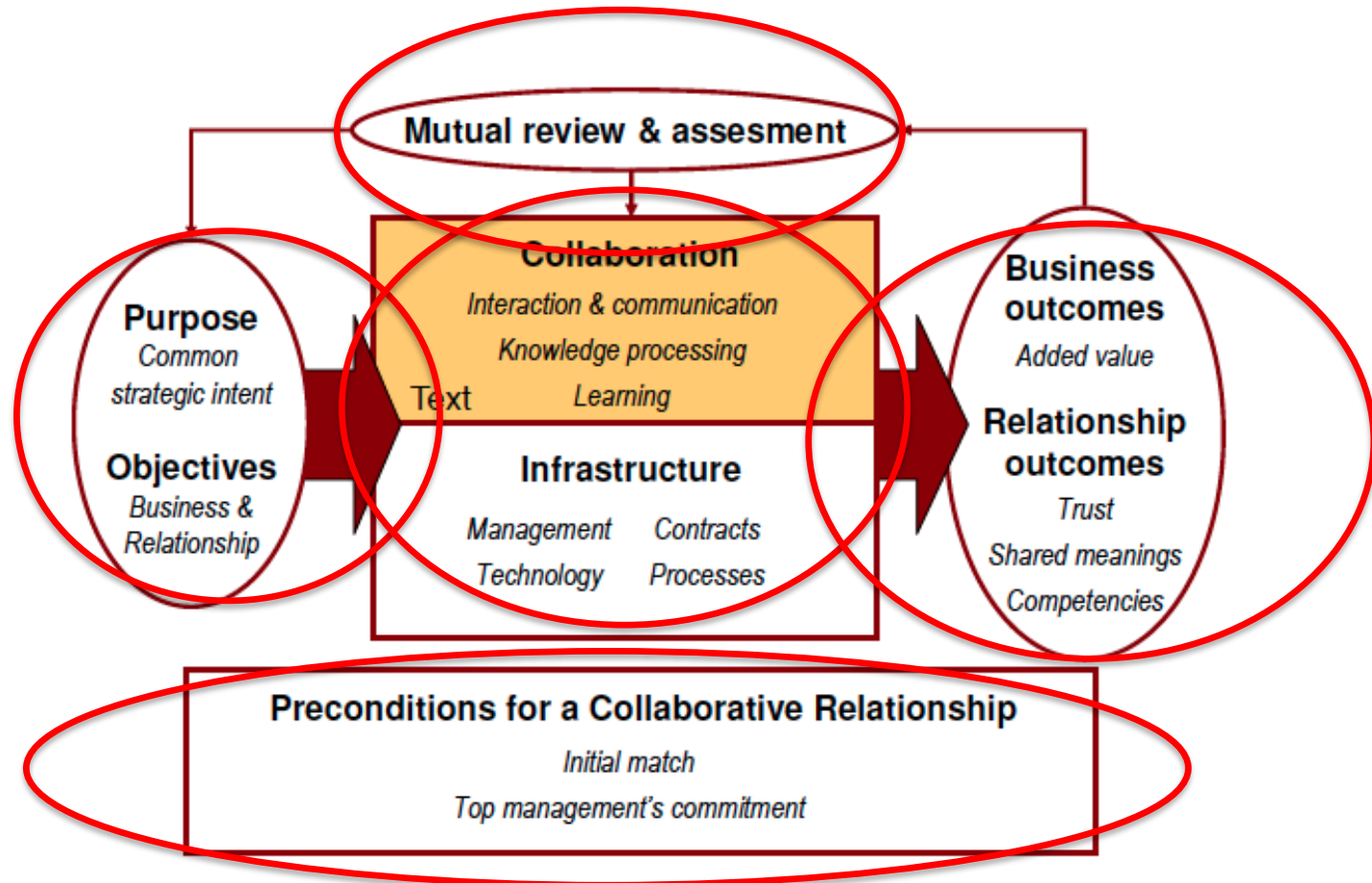
The process through which collaboration occurs



The outcomes of the collaboration

How much dissimilarity and asymmetry is tolerable?

Dynamics of a collaborative relationship



Is there a difference between inter- and intraorganizational knowledge transfer?

Inter-Organizational Knowledge Transfer

679

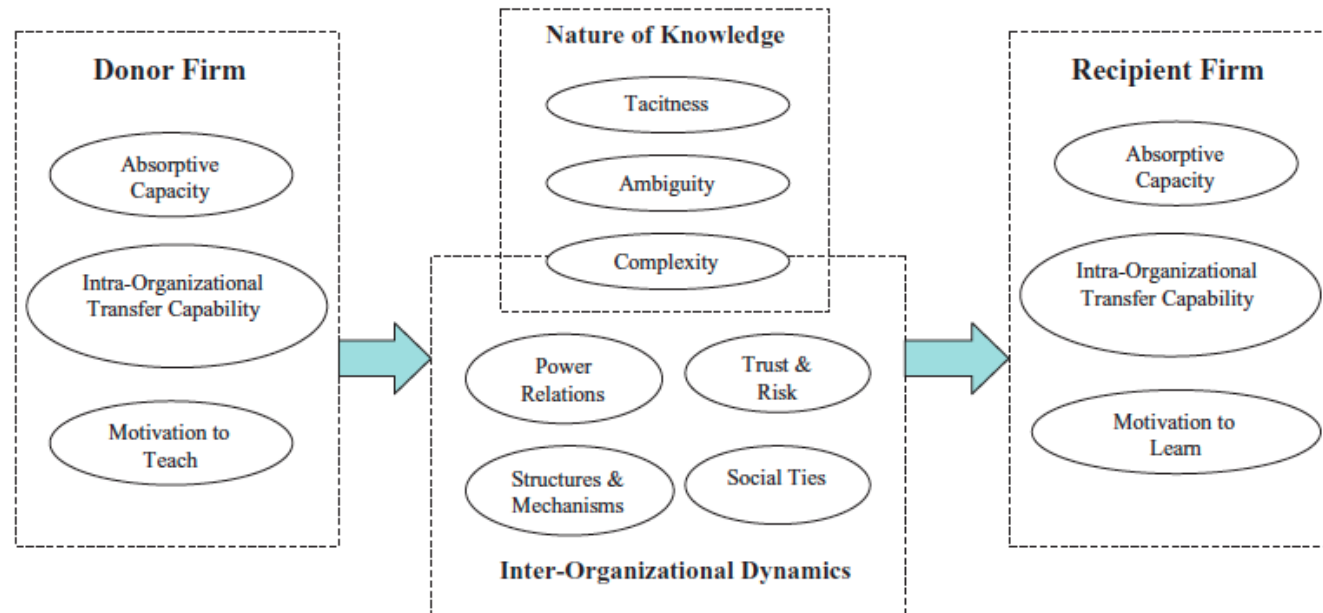


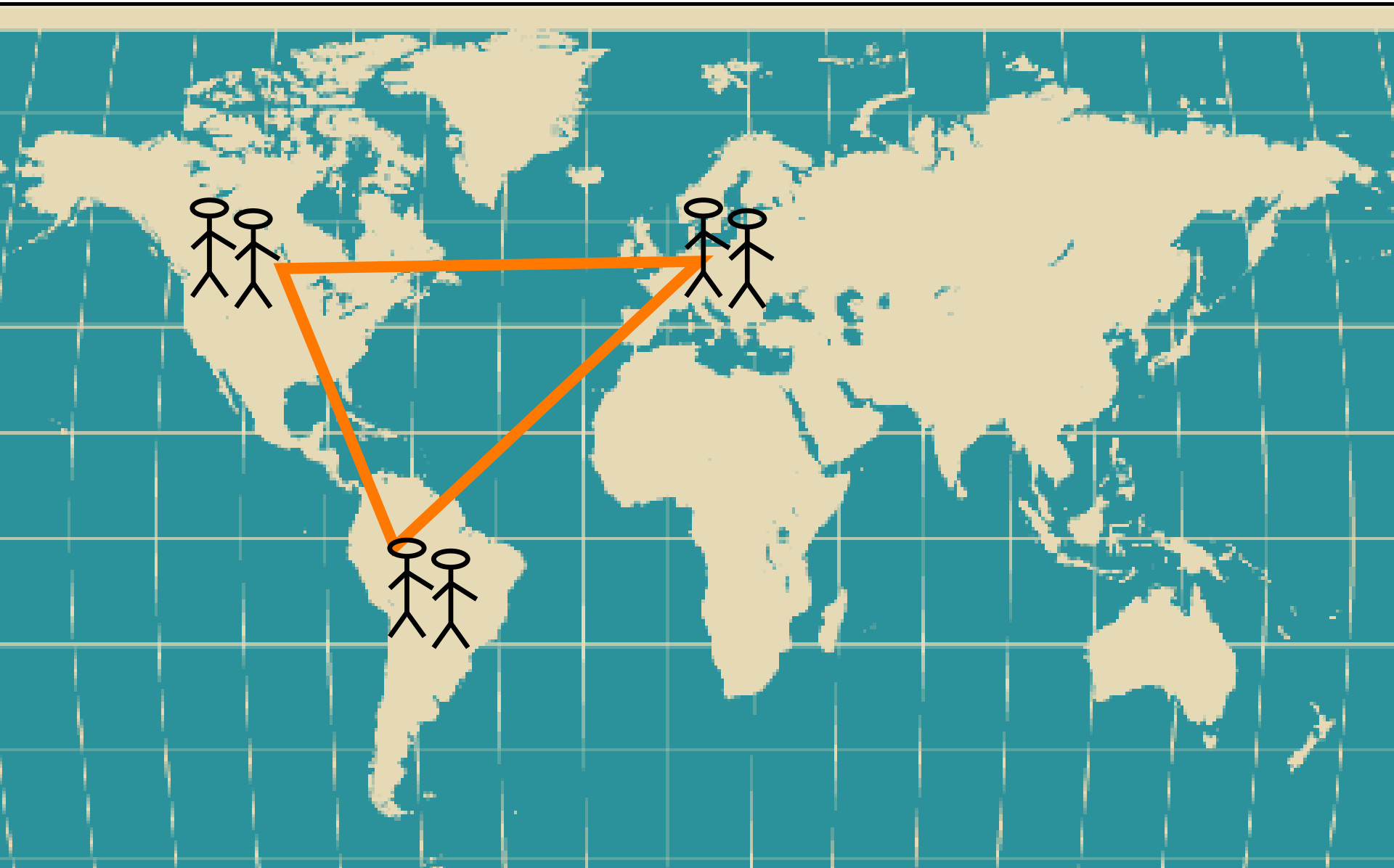
Figure 1. Factors influencing inter-organizational knowledge transfer

100 % of you will encounter following...
(or have experiences already...)

Problems in virtual collaboration (Cramton C.

(2001) The Mutual Knowledge Problem and Its Consequences for Dispersed Collaboration, Organization Science, Vol. 12 (3), pp.346 –371

- 13 teams in 9 universities in 3 continents
- Each team had 6 students
- Each team involved students from 3 universities
- The teams were given the assignment of
 - (1) coming up with an idea for a business that would use the Internet in some way,
 - (2) writing a business plan,
 - (3) creating a presentation for investors or an online storefront.
- The project spanned a seven-week period.



Problems in virtual collaboration (Cramton 2001)

- Collaboration was studied through communication logs (emails, chat discussions, written memos and documents of the groups, etc.)
 - Problems were counted and the challenges were evaluated using categories:
 - **Lack of contextual information** (E.g. different evaluation criteria in different sites, unexpected spring term brakes)
 - **Unevenly distributed information** (E.g. emails were sent to wrong recipients, some information was intentionally sent only to some members of the group)
 - **Differences in salience of information** (What information and knowledge is relevant / irrelevant, what is important / unimportant)
 - **Differences in speed of access** (Some students were able to access Internet only from the university premises, some had 24 hour access)
 - **Meaning of silence uncertain** (If no-one comments, does it mean that everyone agrees or everyone disagrees? Am I a receiver or provider of knowledge at the given moment?)
 - **Technical problems**
-

Problems in virtual collaboration (Cramton 2001)

	Lack of contextual information	Unevenly distributed information	Differences in salience of information	Differences in speed of access	Meaning of silence uncertain	Technical problems
Serious problem	54	69	23	23	46	69
Some problem	23	23	46	38	54	23
Not a problem	23	8	31	38	0	8
	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Size of an organization



Bill Gore – the late founder of the company, found through trial and error that 150 employees per plant was most ideal. *“We found again and again that things get clumsy at a hundred and fifty,”*

- Large organizations tend to:
 - Be more formal
 - Have more standardized operations
 - Have more recourses
 - Have potential to excessive pool of social capital
 - Have variety of skills and knowledge
- Smaller organizations
 - Sharing of information and knowledge is easy
 - May lack competences to develop KCM
 - May lack resources to develop KCM
 - Organizational knowledge processes may vary
 - May be limited in skills and knowledge
 - Flexible and fast to change
 - May be dependent on key individuals

Harjoitustöiden arvosteluperusteet

- Assessment and scoring of the case assignment is based on:
 - Objectives of the assignment (clarity, ambition, relevance, scope, originality) + style, design, layout (max 5 points)
 - Comprehensiveness of the analysis (max 5 points)
 - Reasoning and argumentation with appropriate reference material, correct usage of the subject specific terms and models/theories, achievement of the objectives defined by the group, ability to critical thinking (max 10 points)
 - Practical relevance of the paper, production and argumentation of own ideas, implementation potential of the development ideas (max 10 points)

Seuraavaksi

- Keskustelua “sekaryhmissä”: kokemusten vaihtoa ryhmätyön tekemisestä
 - Keskeisiä oivalluksia, ahaa-elämyksiä
 - Mikä on ollut vaikeaa
 - 20-30 min

Critical view on knowledge and competence management

- Wilson, T.D. (2002) "The nonsense of 'knowledge management'" *Information Research*, 8(1), paper no. 144 [Available at <http://InformationR.net/ir/8-1/paper144.html>]
- *“Knowledge Management’ suffers from the same problem as many other management labels: it assumes that knowledge is a ‘thing’ (object) which is amenable to being ‘managed’ by a ‘subject’ (a manager). The analogy is with ‘managing culture’– seeing culture as an independent set of variables which become embodied in organizations and which can be manipulated (managed) by suitably sensitized people. Yet it is now widely accepted that culture is not an ‘add-on’ to organizations. Culture is what an organization is rather than what it has.” **

References

- Argote L. & Ingram P. (2000) Knowledge Transfer: A Basis for Competitive Advantage in Firms. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 82 (1), 150-169
- Gupta A. & Govindarajan V. (2000) Knowledge flows within multinational corporations. *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 21 (4), 473-496
- Cohen W. & Levinthal D. (1990) Absorptive Capacity: A New Perspective On Learning And Innovation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*; Vol. 35 (1), 128-152
- Szulanski G (1996) Exploring Internal Stickiness: Impediments to the Transfer of Best Practice within the Firm. *Strategic Management Journal* Vol. 17 27-244
- Carlile P. (2004) Transferring, Translating, and Transforming: An Integrative Framework for Managing Knowledge Across Boundaries. *Organization Science*, Vol. 15 (5), p555-568.
- Inkpen A. (1996) Creating Knowledge through Collaboration. *California Management Review*, vol. 39 (1), 123-140.
- Larsson R., Bengtsson L., Henriksson K. & Sparks J. (1998) The Interorganizational Learning Dilemma: Collective Knowledge Development in Strategic Alliances. *Organization Science*, vol. 9 (3), 285-305.
- Cummings J. & Teng B-S. (2003) Transferring R&D Knowledge: The Key Factors Affecting Knowledge Transfer Success. *Journal of Engineering and Technology Management*, vol. 20, 39-68.
- Rangachari P. (2009) Knowledge sharing networks in professional complex systems. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 13 (3), pp. 132 – 145.
- Becker, M. C., 2001. Managing dispersed knowledge: organizational problems, managerial strategies, and their effectiveness. *Journal of Management Studies*, 38(7), pp. 1037-1051.
- Carlile P. (2004) Transferring, Translating, and Transforming: An Integrative Framework for Managing Knowledge Across Boundaries. *Organization Science*, Vol. 15 (5), pp. 555-568.
- De Long D., Fahey L. (2000) Diagnosing Cultural Barriers to Knowledge Management. *Academy of Management Executive*, vol. 14 (4), 113-127.