

Socialization Model of Tacit-Tacit Transfer Knowledge through Appreciative Inquiry Approach

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Abstract

The aims of study is to describe combination of two big theory between Socialization model of tacit-tacit transfer knowledge and appreciative inquiry approach conceptually. This research idea comes to find better ways in tacit-tacit transfer of knowledge in knowledge management theory. This research is conceptual research and the limitation is about empirical study itself. The result of conceptual paper combine the process of tacit-tacit transfer knowledge and appreciate inquiry in mental model, creative dialogue and develop mutual trust. Appreciative inquiry as a method to increase positive sense in transfer knowledge can be applied in tacit-tacit transfer knowledge phase in SECI Model.

Keywords: *Knowledge Management; SECI Model; Appreciative Inquiry*



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INTRODUCTION

The advocates of the knowledge Based-view of the organization (Spender, 1996; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka and Ichijo, 2007) emphasize that the two predominant goals of the organization are the generation and the application of knowledge. An organization that has the ability to create knowledge on an ongoing basis has the advantage of having developed a unique capability of being dynamic (Mitchell and Boyle, 2010). The competence to generate and apply new organizational knowledge is considered as one of the main sources of the competitive advantage of the firm (Leonard-Barton, 1990; Nonaka, 1994; Spender, 1996; Zollo and Winter, 2002).

If knowledge is a source of competitive advantage, then, then understanding and managing knowledge dynamics become vital for the firm (Heinrichs and Lim, 2005). In the same time, there is a high risk that knowledge dynamics might generate anticompetitive effects on the market (Dima, 2008; Dima, 2010). The organization that wishes to cope dynamically with the changing environment must be able to create knowledge better and faster than its competitors (Gore and Gore, 1999).

The study of literature revealed that there are three distinct phases of knowledge management: before the 90s, the early 90s and the late 90s (Figure 1). In the first phase of knowledge management managers focused on data and information processing, and on information systems management. The goal was to observe, gather, store in data bases, and manage existing knowledge in information systems as any other assets. In the second phase, knowledge management focused on the organizational knowledge sharing process. In the third phase the focus changed to the sources and stimulating factors of knowledge creation. Nonaka's contribution to the knowledge creation theory development integrates the knowledge creation process (SECI) with the place (the concept of Ba as a space for knowledge creation), and with the enabling conditions (leadership, organizational culture, learning). This theory emphasizes

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31098/ijmesh.v1i1.4>

the importance of knowledge context and stimulating conditions within an organization. Knowledge is generated in a given social context. As a consequence, knowledge is contextual. It is created in a specific context, and it has a meaning relevant to that specific context (Jakubik, 2008).

In Western epistemology, knowledge has been defined as “justified true belief” (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This formulation gives the impression that knowledge is something objective, absolute, and context-free. However, this may not be necessary true since it is humans who hold and justify beliefs. Knowledge cannot exist without human subjectivity. “Truth” differs if we are to take into consideration the values of the person that holds that truth and the context in which we look at it. On the other hand the Eastern epistemology regards knowledge as “a meaningful set of information that constitutes a justified true belief and/or an embodied technical skill.”

Thus, the knowledge creation is defined as “a dynamic human process of justifying a personal belief toward the truth and/or embodying a technical skill through practice” (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka, Umemoto and Senno, 1996). The Japanese thinkers tend to consider knowledge as primarily “tacit,” personal, context-specific, and not so easy to communicate to others. Westerners, on the other hand, tend to view knowledge as “explicit,” formal, objective, and not so difficult to process with computers. But these two types of knowledge are not totally separate, they are mutually complementary entities. They interact one with each other and even may transform one into the other, in given specific conditions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Basic Characteristic

The best known knowledge dynamics model has been originated in Nonaka’s research (Nonaka, 1991; Nonaka, 1994), and then it has been continuously developed in a classical Japanese way through incremental contributions coming from his coworkers (Nonaka, Byosiere, Borucki, and Komo, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka and Komo, 1998; Nonaka, Toyama, and Byosiere, 2001; Nonaka, Toyama, 2007). Basically, this model contains three main structures: the SECI model, the Ba shared context, and the knowledge assets platform. From philosophical point of view, this model has an epistemological dimension and an ontological dimension. The epistemological dimension describes the transformation of the tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, and the reverse action, the transformation of the explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. The ontological dimension describes the transformation of individual knowledge into group knowledge, and then, the transformation of the group knowledge into organizational knowledge, with possible reverse actions from the organization toward group and individual. Further, the whole organization may exchange knowledge with its operational environment, conceived as a knowledge ecosystem. The framework of this model has been taken from the resource-based theory of the firm, where the tangible resources have been replaced with intangible resources, and all material processes have been replaced with intangible operations. Actually, any firm contains both tangible and intangible resources, and knowledge dynamics represents the complementary component of the tangible dynamics of the organization. Thus, knowledge management appears as an integral part of the operational and strategic management of the firm. The driving force of the knowledge dynamics model is the knowledge vision which gives a direction to knowledge creation. “It also gives the firm direction with respect to the knowledge to be created beyond the firms’ existing capabilities, and therefore determines how the firm evolves in the long run” (Nonaka and Toyama, 2007, p. 18). The knowledge vision is intrinsically related to the value system of the firm, which defines what is truth, goodness and beauty for the whole organization. For instance, at Honda, the focus is on the joy of buying,

selling and creating products and services beyond the mere competition and financial metrics. Based on this knowledge vision the firm defines some driving objectives that are the engine of the whole knowledge dynamics model.

SECI Model Cycle

The epistemological dimension is exploited in the four stage process known as SECI: Socialization – Externalization – Combination – Internalization. Each stage represents a cornerstone of the operational knowledge dynamics (Figure 3). Socialization is considered by Nonaka and his co-workers the most important knowledge transfer of this cycle since it involves the hidden and sticky part of all knowledge created at individual level. It is the tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1983). Tacit knowledge is generated by direct experience of each individual and it goes to the non-rational mind.

As Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, p. 8) emphasize, “Tacit knowledge is highly personal and hard to formalize, making it difficult to communicate or to share with others. Subjective insights, intuitions, and hunches fall into this category of knowledge. Furthermore, tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in an individual’s action and experience, as well as in the ideals, values, or emotions he or she embraces”. Tacit knowledge contains basically two components: a technical component which reflects the know-how of professional activities, and a cognitive component which reflects mental models, beliefs and perceptions as a result of many performed similar actions. Tacit knowledge embraces also highly subjective insights, intuitions and hunches. Leaders usually make use of these fine ingredients of tacit knowledge, being able to inspire and motivate their followers. Socialization is an opportunity for participating individuals to share their experiences and to learn through a direct exchange of tacit knowledge. It is well known the way apprentices learn from their masters through continuous observation and imitations. Socialization is conceived not only for workers from the same team or department but also for meetings of firm employees with their customers and suppliers. However, socialization must go beyond the everyday dialogues and exchange of neutral phrases. It must stimulate deeper layers of experiences and stored knowledge. Actually, only individuals with higher levels of understanding and knowledge richness can transfer tacit knowledge to the others. At the organizational level this idea is used by promoting the best practice. The identification and the transfer of best practices is one of the most recent methods used in operational management for accelerating the adaptation process of the firm.

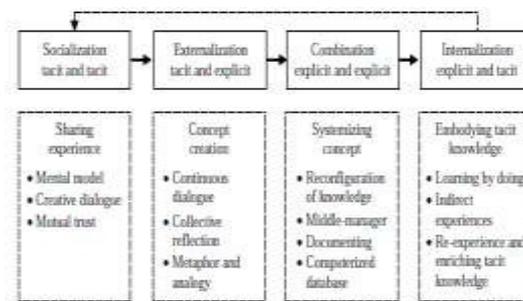
However, this method is not fully efficient due to the difficulty of exchanging tacit knowledge characterized by the internal stickiness (Szulansky, 1996; Szulansky and Jensen, 2004). Also, there is a series of individual and organizational factors that slow down or inhibit this knowledge transfer during socialization (Bratianu, 2008; Bratianu, 2009a; Bratianu and Orzea, 2010).

The most foundational concept of organizational knowledge creation theory is that organizations create knowledge through a continual conversion process between individuals’ tacit knowledge and the organizations’ explicit knowledge (Figure 1) through members’ interactions. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), individuals’ initial tacit knowledge in the organization becomes collective tacit knowledge (through various socializations); then collective tacit knowledge becomes explicit concepts through task-oriented verbal and symbol exchanges (externalization). This externalization becomes more explicit and newly applicable through combined concepts (combination) and further transfers into employees’ enhanced tacit knowledge and assumptions (internalization) to trigger the same cycle continuously. This socio-cognitive view of knowledge, which posits that knowledge continuously shapes and grows through goal-driven member interactions, and gains legitimacy only through members’

acceptance supports that organizational knowledge is created within the work-surrounding social milieu (Antonacopoulou and Chiva, 2007; Brown and Duguid, 1991; Engeström, 2007). Figure 1 also shows which types of behaviors, goals, and human and organizational resources strengthen each concept of the SECI knowledge conversion process.

Four modes of knowledge conversion

Organizational knowledge conversion is initially triggered through socialization (S). Socialization is the originating shared space that converts individuals' tacit knowledge gained through formal or informal observation, imitation, and work-based experiences to collective tacit knowledge, emerging as shared mental models of work norms and culture (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This initial knowledge creation supports that the primary root of organizational knowledge is always individual employees (Tsoukas, 1996). Effective socialization requires promotion of diversity, continuous interactions, supportive collaborations, and boundary-crossing interactions among employees, even with customers, suppliers, and competitors (von Krogh et al., 2000, 2001). Encouragement of creative dialogues and mutual trust, particularly on the part of organizational leaders is very important for effective sharing (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).



Source: Song (2008, p. 92)

(Song, 2008, p.92)

The second mode, externalization (E), converts collective tacit knowledge into sharable explicit concepts. Compared with socialization, where knowledge has not yet been justified for sharing explicitly with others and interactions tend to be loosely defined, externalization tends to take place through formal team meetings and collaborative work assignments to create and codify applicable concepts (Nonaka et al., 2000). Leaders are in the prime position to provide visions for anchoring knowledge creation directions and arrange work assignments to mobilize this phase. Here, language and symbols (e.g. metaphors, figures, diagrams, and analogies) play a critical role in converting collaborating individuals' inductive and deductive thinking to new and mutually understandable perspectives and insights (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka et al., 2000). When tacit knowledge is made explicit through member interactions, "knowledge is crystallized, thus allowing it to be shared by others, and it becomes the basis of new knowledge" (Nonaka et al., 2000, p. 9).

The third phase of combination (C), is necessary to convert team-level explicit concepts into organization-wide knowledge assets to be leveraged. This process connects and combines distributed explicit experiences to create a systematic knowledge system, and middle managers and cyberspaces (e.g. information and virtual technology systems) play key roles in this process (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka et al., 2000). Middle-level managers constantly link and evaluate vision, strategies, and

business performances to systemize working concepts (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). At the same time, technologies facilitate the process of gathering, organizing, editing, categorizing, and incorporating newly converted explicit knowledge into existing organizational knowledge by creating and disseminating documents, routines, and work rules to be applied across the organization (Nonaka and Konno, 1998).

Through the last phase of internalization, I, new and constantly evolving organizational explicit knowledge is converted into individuals' tacit knowledge, which is also constantly growing and changing. Individuals' experimentations with new organizational knowledge and reflections critically affect the course of internalization. Additionally, to promote effective internalization, verbalized and diagrammed knowledge needs to be transferred into documents, manuals, or oral stories in order to help individuals indirectly experience what others do (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This tacit knowledge accumulated at the individual level can then trigger a new spiral of knowledge creation when it is shared again with other members through socialization (Nonaka et al., 2000). All together, the complete cycle across four modes is the transcendental process in which individual knowledge becomes group- and organizational-level knowledge, then back to the individual level.

For instance, socialization within work units or externalization of ideas in cross-functional teams shapes individual knowledge into group-level knowledge. Then this knowledge is further promoted and distributed to the organizational-level through managers and information systems through the combination phase. In his discussion of organizational learning and knowledge management (KM), Spender (2008) pointed out that both topics, although seemingly different at the surface level to focus on the process of learning and the outcome of learning, respectively, share the common foundation of leveraging human interactions for goal-driven activities with the research body of KM laying emphasis on identifying, storing, and optimizing knowledge assets, and delivering the result to needed locations. Behaviors proposed as essential for organizational knowledge creation and conversion are distinct; thus, the four modes of the SECI theory should be tested for nomological relationships (Benson and Hagtvet, 1996).

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a product of the positive psychology and organizational change movements developed in the 1980s by David Cooperrider and his colleagues at Case Western Reserve University (Cooperrider and Sekerka, 2003). Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003) describe AI as "a form of personal and organizational change based on questions and dialogues about strengths, successes, values, hopes, and dreams." The technique focuses on positive energy rather than negative energy.

The appreciative inquiry process reflects a set of principles drawn from current theory and research in the human and social sciences:

1. The constructionist principle, which depicts organizations as being invented and maintained through social interaction.
2. The principle of simultaneity, which helps organizations understand that inquiry and change are simultaneous. Once an inquiry is made and a question is asked, the change process begins.
3. The poetic principle, which describes how organizations as compilation of their past, present and future knowledge, subject to a variety of interpretations.
4. The positive principle, which describes how organizations change more easily in an environment that supports and encourages innovation.

5. The anticipatory principle, which states that an organization's potential can be anticipated through analysis of the stories told about it by its stakeholders. This anticipation guides the organization into the future.

The AI process initiates and fosters a conversation within an organization which prompts participants to tell the narratives that define the organization and the individuals who comprise it. The conversation then reframes these narratives in a way that fosters transformation. This is achieved by following a four-phase model known as the 4-D Cycle: discovery, dream, design, and destiny. The "discovery" phase aims to identify the "best of what is" by soliciting and capturing stories about positive knowledge of the current situation. Stories are central to the AI process; they serve to create and foster images of success. The "dream" phase focuses on "what might be." In contrast to the type of critical reflection that is practiced in traditional transformative learning, this approach uses a process of appreciative reflection which emphasizes the positive knowledge of the current condition. This avoids the dissonance that is inherent in the critical approach. During the "design" phase, "provocative propositions" or design statements are articulated. The stories generated in the discovery, dream, and design phases stimulate the collective imagination to envision a desired future. The fourth phase, "destiny," defines "what will be"; it yields action plans to achieve the design statements.

METHODOLOGY

The paper is conceptual paper using literature review as methodology.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The model focuses on the Socialization (tacit-tacit transfer knowledge) in SECI model through Appreciative inquiry in order to improve level of trust, creates positive dialogue and positive emotions in interaction.

Socialization is the originating shared space that converts individuals' tacit knowledge gained through formal or informal observation, imitation, and work-based experiences to collective tacit knowledge, emerging as shared mental models of work norms and culture (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). This initial knowledge creation supports that the primary root of organizational knowledge is always individual employees (Tsoukas, 1996). Effective socialization requires promotion of diversity, continuous interactions, supportive collaborations, and boundary-crossing interactions among employees, even with customers, suppliers, and competitors (von Krogh et al., 2000, 2001). Encouragement of creative dialogues and mutual trust, particularly on the part of organizational leaders is very important for effective sharing (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). To becoming a positive and creative dialogue and mutual trust between employees, they need to build positive and appreciative each other in interaction through systematic steps to find out the positive emotion and optimize socialization phase.

The Appreciative inquiry is a steps of how dialogues become more positive and appreciative in order to optimize the tacit-tacit transfer knowledge through steps as stated below:

1. Discovery

First steps, invite dialogue partner to describes a moment or experience or knowledge which make them proud of their self. This moment proposed to improve the positive feeling between dialogue partner. Everybody should listen the stores carefully. Find out the secret things from the moment/experience/knowledge that they get. What the important things that make them so proud of the

knowledge or experiences. Find the other moment/experience/ knowledge that make them so proud and finds out he pattern how they get them. From the pattern, find out the strenght of the self to get the experience or the knowlegde. This is a session to find put the best of the self from each dialogue partner.

2. Dream

Find out the possibility and the benefit of their knowledge for their self, group or organization. Reinforced it until dialogue partner can describe how useful the knowledge of their self to organization.

3. Design

The focus on this steps are how the dialogue partner can invite to the partner to describing the experience/Knowledge steps by step and detail. This steps can used 5 W & 1 H process (What, Where, When, Who, Why and How)

4. Destiny

Find out the systematic knowledge that has been described before and support to not to stop to get more and more knowledge in different context.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would acknowledge Mr Jan Tjakraatmaja and team which conduct the major of Knowledge Management and Learning Organization in School of Business and Mangement Institut Teknologi Bandung.

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